

**PEQAB**

Postsecondary Education Quality Assessment Board  
Commission d'évaluation de qualité de l'éducation postsecondaire

---

**November 2005**

**Handbook for  
Private Organizations**

*Applying for Ministerial Consent Under  
the Post-secondary Education Choice  
and Excellence Act, 2000*

**Postsecondary Education Quality Assessment Board**  
Suite 1511  
2 Carlton Street  
Toronto, Ontario  
Canada M5B 1J3

Telephone: 416-325-1686  
Fax: 416-325-1711

E-mail: [peqab@edu.gov.on.ca](mailto:peqab@edu.gov.on.ca)  
Web: <http://peqab.edu.gov.on.ca>

## **The Postsecondary Education Quality Assessment Board**

The Postsecondary Education Quality Assessment Board makes recommendations to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities concerning applications for Ministerial Consent under the terms of the *Post-secondary Education Choice and Excellence Act, 2000* and other matters referred to it by the Minister pursuant to the act.

### **Members of the Board**

Dale Patterson, Chair  
Jane Blackwell  
Mariette Carrier-Fraser  
Ashok Dalvi  
Konata Lake  
David Leyton-Brown, Ph.D.  
Maureen J. Morton, Vice chair  
Ian Mugridge, Ph.D.  
William Robson

### **Secretariat**

Donald N. Baker, Ph.D.  
Director  
Telephone: 416-325-9058  
E-mail: donald.baker@edu.gov.on.ca

Irene Butenko, Ph.D.  
Senior Policy Advisor  
Telephone: 416-325-2850  
E-mail : irene.butenko@edu.gov.on.ca

Terry Miosi, Ph.D  
Senior Policy Advisor  
Telephone : 416-325-4031  
E-mail: terry.miosi@edu.gov.on.ca

Sascha Marschang  
Administrative Coordinator  
Telephone: 416-212-1230  
E-mail: sascha.marschang@edu.gov.on.ca

Julie Mahendran  
Administrative Assistant  
Telephone: 416-325-1686  
E-mail: julie.mahendran@edu.gov.on.ca

## CONTENTS

|                                                              |    |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| 1. Preface.....                                              | 4  |
| 2. Quality Assessment In Context .....                       | 5  |
| 3. Ministerial Consent .....                                 | 6  |
| 4. The Postsecondary Education Quality Assessment Board..... | 7  |
| 5. Application Procedure.....                                | 9  |
| 6. Organization Review Process .....                         | 12 |
| 7. Organization Review Standards.....                        | 13 |
| 8. Program Review Process .....                              | 17 |
| 9. Program Review Standard .....                             | 19 |
| 10. Recognition of Prior Assessments .....                   | 37 |
| 11. Nomenclature of Degrees .....                            | 38 |
| 12. Policy on Conflict of Interest .....                     | 41 |
| 13. Use of "University" and "University College" .....       | 42 |

## APPENDIX I: CHANGES INCORPORATED IN THIS EDITION OF THE HANDBOOK

## 1. PREFACE

This document is intended as a guide for private organizations or institutions seeking Ministerial Consent to offer or to advertise degree programs or parts thereof in Ontario or to operate a university in Ontario. "Public" and "private" organizations are defined in the *Directives and Guidelines for Applying for Ministerial Consent Under the Post-secondary Education Choice and Excellence Act, 2000*.

The regulation defines "public institution" as a person who,

- (a) receives regular and ongoing operating funds from a government for the purpose of providing postsecondary education,
- (b) is governed by a body the majority of whose members are appointed by elected or government-appointed officials, or
- (c) is listed in the Schedule to this Regulation [Ontario Regulation 279/02].

All other organizations are deemed to be **private** for the purposes of applying for Ministerial Consent.

All applications for consent are made to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities of Ontario pursuant to the *Post-secondary Education Choice and Excellence Act, 2000*<sup>1</sup>. The Minister refers all applications made under the act to the Postsecondary Education Quality Assessment Board for review and recommendation. The Minister makes the final decision on all applications.

Potential applicants should consult the following documents:

- the *Directives and Guidelines for Applying for Ministerial Consent Under the Post-secondary Education Choice and Excellence Act, 2000*; and
- the Board's handbooks, submission guidelines, guidelines for quality assessors, guidelines for organization reviewers, and other documents. These documents may be found on the Board's web site: <http://www.peqab.edu.gov.on.ca>.

Applicants are advised that any material submitted to the Minister and the Board is subject to the provisions of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*<sup>2</sup>.

This handbook outlines the Board's criteria and procedures for **private organizations**. Applicants should note that the Board may revise its policies from time to time to keep them current and to incorporate any new regulations or policy directions from the Minister.

The preparation of this handbook has benefited from the advice of stakeholders and the work of other accrediting and quality assurance bodies, including:

- documents on program appraisals by the Ontario Council of Graduate Studies (OCGS) and Ontario Council of Academic Vice-Presidents (OCAV);
- the Accreditation Handbook of the Private Colleges Accreditation Board of Alberta;
- the Accreditation Policies and Maintenance Guidebook and other documents of the Private Post Secondary Education Commission of British Columbia;
- the Policy on Quality Assurance of the Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission;
- the Handbook and other publications of the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education of the United Kingdom;
- the Australian National Training Authority, which regulates quality assurance and credential recognition for vocational programs;
- the accreditation criteria and procedures used by major accrediting bodies in the United States;

We are also grateful to the many stakeholders and other interested parties who contributed their comments during the preparation of this handbook.

<sup>1</sup> *Post-secondary Education Choice and Excellence Act, 2000*, S.O., c. 36.

<sup>2</sup> *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, R.S.O. 1990, c. F.31.

## 2. QUALITY ASSESSMENT IN CONTEXT

### 2.1 Ontario

Prior to 1983 there was no Ontario legislation preventing any organization from offering degree programs, granting degrees, or calling itself a university. Traditionally, degree-granting authority had been based in a royal charter or provincial statute.

From 1984 to 2001, the *Degree Granting Act*<sup>3</sup> set conditions under which degrees were granted and degree programs offered in Ontario. Under the Degree Granting Act, an Ontario-based institution required an act of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to grant degrees, to offer programs leading to a degree, to call itself a university, and to advertise using the word "university." The Degree Granting Act also provided that an out-of-province institution required Consent from the Minister to undertake similar activities in Ontario.

The *Post-secondary Education Choice and Excellence Act, 2000* permits the granting of degrees or operation of a university either by an act of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario or with the consent of the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. The act also sets out the responsibilities of the Postsecondary Education Quality Assessment Board which makes recommendations to the Minister on applications for Ministerial Consent under section 7(3) (a) of the act. Section 7 also stipulates that the Board's criteria "(a) must be in accordance with educational standards recognized in Ontario and other jurisdictions; and (b) must comply with such policy directions as may be given by the Minister."

### 2.2 International Harmonization

Though the Postsecondary Education Quality Assessment Board's roots are local, its work is consistent with the trend toward the harmonization of postsecondary educational standards manifest in such other jurisdictions as the United States, the European Union, Australia, and South Africa. The

international trend toward the harmonization of educational standards reflects a desire to:

- ensure that students and society are served by programs of assured quality in their design;
- facilitate lifelong learning by documenting the standards students have met in programs at each level;
- ensure that graduates possess necessary knowledge and skills when they enter the workforce or pursue further studies;
- facilitate the mobility of labour across jurisdictional lines;
- facilitate academic credit transfer and the recognition of academic credentials;
- foster accountability by requiring educational institutions to articulate their learning outcome standards; and
- facilitate comparative quality assessment.

<sup>3</sup> *Degree Granting Act, 1983, c.36, as rep.by Post-secondary Education Choice and Excellence Act, 2000, c. 36*

### 3. MINISTERIAL CONSENT

#### 3.1 When Consent is Required

Under the terms of the *Post-secondary Education Choice and Excellence Act, 2000*, the consent of the Ontario Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities is required for anyone seeking in Ontario, either "directly or indirectly," to

- grant a degree;
- provide a program or part of a program of postsecondary study leading to a degree to be conferred by a person inside or outside Ontario;
- advertise a program or part of a program of postsecondary study offered in Ontario leading to a degree conferred by a person in or outside Ontario;
- sell, offer for sale or provide by agreement for a fee, reward or other remuneration, a diploma, certificate, document or other material that indicates or implies the granting or conferring of a degree;
- operate or maintain a university;
- use or be known by a name of a university or any derivation or abbreviation of a name of a university;
- hold oneself out to be a university; and
- make use of the term university or any derivation or abbreviation of the word in advertising relating to an educational institution in Ontario.

#### 3.2 Minister's Policy Directives

Applicants should consult the *Directives and Guidelines for Applying for Ministerial Consent Under the Post-secondary Education Choice and Excellence Act, 2000*, available on the Board's web site: <http://peqab.edu.gov.on.ca>.

#### 3.3 No Entitlement to Funding

Section 8 of the *Post-secondary Education Choice and Excellence Act, 2000* provides that the granting of a consent does not entitle the consent holder to any funding from the Government of Ontario. Any eligibility for public research funds will turn on whether the research funds are to be available to non-public entities and on the specific requirements established by the government ministry or agency.

In addition, consent does not entitle the consent holder to administer student financial assistance on behalf of the Minister or entitle the consent holder's students to student financial assistance under the Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP) or any other government program providing direct student financial assistance, awards, or grants. Organizations wanting to become approved institutions for the purposes of student loans must make an independent application for such approval directly to the Student Support Branch of the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities.

For general information on the Ontario Student Assistance Program, the terms that must be met in order to be an approved institution for the purposes of student loans, or the process for applying for such status, please see <http://osap.gov.on.ca>.

## 4. THE POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION QUALITY ASSESSMENT BOARD

### 4.1 Members

The Board consists of a chair appointed by the Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council, a vice-chair and not more than nine other members appointed by the Minister.

### 4.2 Major Responsibilities

Under sections 5 and 7 of the *Post-secondary Education Choice and Excellence Act, 2000*, the Board is responsible for the following tasks:

- reviewing all applications made under the act for Ministerial Consent;
- determining the criteria and procedures for program quality assessments and organization reviews and undertaking such reviews;
- creating program quality assessment panels, organization review panels, and advisory committees;
- undertaking research to assist in the Board's work;
- providing recommendations to the Minister;
- addressing any other matter referred to it by the Minister.

### 4.3 Guiding Principles

To provide a context for its decisions, the Board has embraced some core principles. These will be considered in the evaluation of all proposals presented to the Board.

The Board holds that students, parents, employers, postsecondary institutions in Ontario and elsewhere, and the broader public may reasonably expect that:

- its policies and procedures for reviewing programs will ensure that programs recommended to the Minister meet appropriate learning outcome standards for the degree-level;

- proposed degree programs are designed to facilitate the recognition of the credential by:
  - applicable legislatively recognized licensing and regulatory bodies;
  - appropriate professional bodies;
  - other postsecondary institutions;
  - employers;
- assessment of programs focuses principally on the quality of learning outcomes;
- Board decisions and processes are expeditious and transparent; and
- applicants know from the outset the standards and benchmarks to be used in assessing their application.

### 4.4 Secretariat

The secretariat provides administrative support to the Postsecondary Education Quality Assessment Board. Among other responsibilities, the secretariat undertakes research and drafts the Board's criteria, policies, and procedures. Each application for Ministerial Consent is managed by a senior policy advisor who assists the applicant in understanding the Board's criteria and procedures and coordinates the Board's relations with Ministry officials, regulatory bodies and expert assessors to facilitate the comprehensive review of applications.

### 4.5 Information on the Web Site

#### 4.5.1 Information about the Board:

The following information will be maintained on the Board's web site:

- a link to the *Post-secondary Education Choice and Excellence Act, 2000*, and any regulations thereunder;
- contact information for the Board Secretariat;
- a list of current Board members, with their terms of office and brief biographies; and
- the Board's annual report to the Minister.

#### 4.5.2 Information about Policies and Procedures:

The following information will be maintained and updated on the Board's web site:

- policies of the Minister relating to the administration of the *Post-secondary Education Choice and Excellence Act, 2000*;
- the Board's handbooks and guidelines for applicants and assessors;
- guidelines and procedures for submission of documentation for review;
- applicable deadlines; and
- the application fee schedule.

#### 4.5.3 Information about Applications

Once the Board has received an application from the Minister, the Board will post portions on its web site in accordance with the *Submission Guidelines for Private Organizations*.

When posting the information, the Board will identify a deadline for comment from third parties (subject to the provisions of section 5.9 of this handbook).

The applicant must ensure that the Board receives written documentation of all information and/or commitments made during the review process. At the end of the review process, the Board may ask the applicant to submit an updated application.

The status of an application will be indicated as follows: application withdrawn, under review, consent granted by the Minister, or consent denied by the Minister.

If consent is granted, applicants will be asked to submit a final version of their application.

#### 4.5.4 Board Recommendation

Following the Minister's decision and announcement on an application, the Board will post its recommendation and the Minister's decision on its web site.

#### 4.6 Access to Information

All applications and supporting documents are subject to the provisions of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. In accordance with the provisions of the *Freedom of*

*Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, an applicant should identify any information in its application for which the applicant claims confidentiality. The Board cannot guarantee confidentiality, as disclosure may be required pursuant to the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

#### 4.7 Board Reserves Right to Modify Requirements

The Board reserves the right to modify its policies, procedures, criteria, and forms from time to time and will post current versions on its web site. It is the applicant's responsibility to use current policies, procedures, criteria, and forms.

#### 4.8 Board Meetings

The following meeting procedures of the Board are of potential interest to applicants:

- Applicants wishing to forward information or materials to the Board must do so through the secretariat.
- Board meetings will be held *in camera*.
- Board members shall respect the confidential nature of documents, information and records received as Board members, and restrict the use of this information to their work as Board members.
- The director of the Secretariat shall serve as secretary to the Board.

#### 4.9 Confidentiality/Integrity of Process

To protect the integrity and confidentiality of the application and review process, Board members will not discuss individual submissions for review outside the Board's deliberations. Applicants should not attempt to discuss their applications with Board members. In response to an applicant's attempt to lobby Board members, the Board may cease its review of the application and notify the Minister accordingly.

## 5. APPLICATION PROCEDURE

### 5.1 Inquiries

Please address inquiries about the Board's criteria or procedures to:

Postsecondary Education Quality Assessment Board  
Suite 1511  
2 Carlton Street  
Toronto, Ontario  
Canada M5B 1J3  
Phone: 416-325-1686  
Fax: 416-325-1711  
Email: [peqab@edu.gov.on.ca](mailto:peqab@edu.gov.on.ca)  
Web site: <http://peqab.edu.gov.on.ca>

### 5.2 Submit Application

Submit to

Postsecondary Education Quality Assessment Board  
Suite 1511  
2 Carlton Street  
Toronto, Ontario  
Canada M5B 1J3

- **three copies** of the following application materials for the Minister:
  - a) a letter of application; and
  - b) a signed "Applicant Acknowledgement and Agreement" form;
- the application fee in the form of a certified cheque in Canadian currency payable to the **Minister of Finance, Ontario**
- **eight (8) paper copies and five (5) electronic copies** of the submission to the Board, prepared in accordance with the *Submission Guidelines for Private Applicants*.

### 5.3 Application Fee

As per the *Directives and Guidelines for Applying for Ministerial Consent under the Post-secondary Education Choice and Excellence Act, 2000* available on the Board web site, separate application and assessment fees shall be payable for each program or part of a program for which the Minister's consent is requested, including applications to renew an existing consent. For

example, an application for consent to offer degree programs leading to a B.A. in psychology, a B.A. in history, and a B.Sc. in Biology will require three application fees (and three separate assessment fees, as outlined below). The application fee is \$5,000 per program proposal.

### 5.4 Assessment Fees and Charges

An applicant is responsible for paying the costs of assessment carried out by advisory panels appointed by the Board. The applicant will be invoiced for the estimated cost of each assessment. A deposit in the estimated amount must be received by the Ministry prior to the commencement of assessment activities.

The Ministry will invoice the applicant for the balance of any unpaid costs or refund any balance owing to the applicant. The Minister's decision will be announced to the applicant when all accounts are settled.

The charge for an assessment will vary with each application, depending on the number of reviewers, the length and complexity of the review, and associated travel, accommodation, and meeting or communication costs, and whether the applicant's response to the organization review or quality assessment panel reports requires further assessment. In general, the costs will not normally exceed \$7500.00 for an organization review and \$12,000 for a program quality assessment, except for the creation of *de novo* degree-granting institutions.

### 5.5 The Board's Procedures

This chapter of the handbook includes a flowchart that outlines the procedures followed for the consideration of an application for consent to offer a degree program (see p. 12). The flowchart provides an overview of the process that the Board will follow in making its recommendations to the Minister. Chapters 6 - 9 describe the procedures and criteria for the organization and program quality reviews.

The process for requests for other forms of Ministerial Consent (e.g., to make use of the term university) will vary according to the complexity of the application.

## 5.6 Disclosure

An applicant shall disclose to the Board any and all information that the Board may require to carry out its evaluation and fulfil its obligation to make informed recommendations to the Minister.

The *Post-secondary Education Choice and Excellence Act, 2000* makes it an offence to knowingly furnish false information in any application, statement or other documentation to be provided. If an applicant is discovered under the act to have knowingly provided false information to the Minister or Board, the Board will recommend that the Minister deny the application for Ministerial Consent.

## 5.7 Ownership of Expert Reports

All reports prepared by the Board's assessors are the property of the Minister. Assessors will hold their deliberations and preliminary reports in confidence.

The Board may include assessment reports and applicant comments in its recommendation to the Minister.

## 5.8 Opportunity for Applicant Comment and Response Deadline

The applicant will have an opportunity to provide further information if the application is found to be incomplete, and to comment on the report from the Organization Review and Quality Assessment Panels, and from third parties in accordance with section 5.10 below.

Although applicants are urged to prepare and promptly submit (e.g., one month) their formal response to an organization review or quality assessment panel report, applicants have a maximum of three months to submit a response to the Board. If there is no response from the applicant, the application and report(s) will be considered by the Board at the first scheduled meeting following the deadline.

The applicant may request an extension of the deadline in writing. In the request to the Board, the applicant should state clearly the reason(s) for the delay and the date by which it expects to provide a response. The Board's decision on whether to grant a delay will be based on the extent to which the

reason for the anticipated delay is outside of the direct control of the applicant.

Upon completion of an organization or program quality review, the Board may find that an application requires minor or technical adjustments to meet the Board's standards. If the Board finds that the necessary adjustments will not require a further review by the Board's assessors, the Board will provide the applicant with twenty-one (21) working days to make the required adjustments. Responses to such requests do not presuppose any outcome with respect to the application.

## 5.9 Opportunity for Public Comment

At the time an application is posted on its web site, the Board will indicate a deadline for comment on the application from interested parties.

Those seeking further information about the application should contact the applicant directly.

Comments about the application received by the deadline will be handled as follows:

- Remarks bearing on the assessment of the application against the Board's criteria will be transmitted to the Board's assessors as well as to the applicant.
- Remarks bearing on the Board's criteria or operations will be transmitted to the Board for consideration.

## 5.10 Withdrawal of an Application

In the event that an applicant wishes to withdraw an application during the process, the applicant must send written notice to the Minister, with a copy to the Board.

Applicants are reminded that, regardless of whether an applicant withdraws, the Board will post all applications on its web site, as indicated above, and report on the status of the application. Regardless of whether the applicant withdraws, all materials and reports received in relation to an application may be subject to the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.

## Ministerial Consent Application Process

### Ministry:

Determines whether application falls under the Act  
If application falls under Act,

- Applicant acknowledgement letter issued
- Application referred to PEQAB



## Postsecondary Education Quality Assessment Board (PEQAB)

### Secretariat

- Acknowledges receipt of application
- Assigns case manager for application
- Reviews application
- Requests additional information from applicant
- Identifies potential Quality Assessment Panel (QAP)
- Forwards application to Board
- Posts application on web site

### PEQAB

- Reviews application; may request more information
- Proceeds with application, decides on assessors and any additional instructions

### Secretariat

- Forwards submission to the Organization Review Panel (ORP)

### Organization Review Panel

- Reviews submission against Board and Minister's criteria
- Submits written report

### Secretariat

- Circulates ORP report to applicant for response
- Receives response from applicant
- Submits report and applicant response to Board
- If Board decides to proceed to program quality assessment, secretariat confirms assessors and notifies applicant of names and additional instructions for review
- Forwards submission to the QAP

### Quality Assessment Panel

- Reviews submission against Board and Minister's criteria
- Submits written report

### Secretariat

- Circulates QAP report to applicant for response
- Receives response from applicant
- Submits report and applicant response to Board

### PEQAB

- Reviews application, report, and response from applicant and determines if more information is needed
- Submits recommendation to Minister



### Ministry:

- Ensures that application fee and any costs associated with the assessment of the application have been paid in full
- Prepares Ministry documents
- Ensures applicant has met regulatory requirements



### Secretariat

- Minister's decision posted on Board's web site after applicant notified of Minister's decision

## 6. ORGANIZATION REVIEW PROCESS

The Organization Review will normally occur prior to the Program Quality Assessment. If the Organization Review results in a negative finding, the Board may decide not to proceed with a Program Quality Assessment and forward its recommendation to the Minister.

### 6.1 Organization Reviewers

Organization Reviewers will be selected by the Board to reflect the several dimensions of consumer protection, including but not limited to financial analysis, admission processes, registrarial functions, learning resources, and educational management. Organization Reviewers may include persons with:

- accounting certification and experience in corporate financial management;
- experience in admissions/ registrarial responsibilities, including admissions policies and academic records management in a degree-granting institution;
- experience in managing learning resources; and
- senior management experience in a degree-granting institution;
- experience with professional, accrediting and regulatory bodies for higher education with and outside of Ontario;

Organization Reviewers must be free of any conflict of interest and be recognized by their peers for having a broad outlook, open mind, and sound judgement.

### 6.2 Organization Review Report

Under the coordination of the Organization Review Committee Chair, the Committee will develop a report that must include at least the following information:

- an assessment of the application against each of the Board's standards and benchmarks stipulated in chapter 7;
- an assessment of the application against each of the criteria and requirements in regulation or stipulated by the Minister;
- an assessment of the sufficiency, reliability and validity of the evidence provided by the applicant; and
- a reasoned recommendation to the Board.

### 6.3 Outcomes of Review

The following are the anticipated outcomes of the Board's Organization Review process:

- *Board approval to proceed with Program Quality Assessment; or*
- *Board recommendation to the Minister to deny consent for the application.*

## 7. ORGANIZATION REVIEW STANDARDS

All private Applicants seeking Ministerial Consent must undergo an Organization Review. The purpose of the Organization Review is to assess the Applicant's organizational character and student protection policies and practices against the Board's criteria and applicable Ministerial requirements.

The Board will assess the Applicant in accord with the following Board's standards.

- 7.1 Mission Statement and Academic Goals
- 7.2 Administrative Capacity
- 7.3 Ethical Conduct
- 7.4 Student Protection
- 7.5 Academic Freedom and Integrity
- 7.6 Financial Stability
- 7.7 Dispute Resolution
- 7.8 Organization Evaluation

### 7.1 Mission Statement and Academic Goals

*The governing body has approved a mission statement and academic goals that identify the academic character and aspirations of the organization, including the extent to which the Applicant is committed to the dissemination of knowledge through teaching and, where applicable, the creation of knowledge and service to the community or related professions.*

#### ***Benchmarks for assessing mission statement and academic goals***

- 1. A clear and well-articulated mission and goals statement.
- 2. Programs are clearly related to the Applicant's mission and goals.
- 3. Resources are used to advance the mission.
- 4. Appropriate academic policies support the mission.

### 7.2 Administrative Capacity

*The Applicant has the legal characteristics, governance structure and administrative capacity*

*necessary to organize and manage a competent institution of higher learning.*

#### ***Benchmarks for assessing administrative capacity***

- 1. The Applicant submits its articles of incorporation, statutory authority, or partnership agreement where applicable; when part of a larger organization, the Applicant identifies the legal nature of that relationship.
- 2. An appropriate governing structure, such as a governing body that is the legally constituted body responsible for managing the assets of the organization and maintaining the purpose, viability and integrity of the institution, achieving institutional policies and goals, selecting administrative leadership, and providing the appropriate physical, fiscal, and human resources.
- 3. The organization's reporting structure clearly indicates the relationship between the owners, governing and managing bodies.
- 4. Governance and decision-making structures that are clear, effective, and consistent with the Applicant's academic purposes.
- 5. Qualified senior administrative staff, including a chief executive officer who is accountable to the governing body and whose full-time or major responsibility is the administration of the institution.
- 6. Sufficient administrative staff with clear lines of administrative authority and accountability necessary to conduct the affairs of the institution in Ontario.
- 7. Administrative capacity to manage effectively an institution of higher learning as demonstrated by co-ordinated business and academic plans detailing the commitment to the academic quality of program content and delivery.
- 8. Development of the curriculum, academic policies, and standards includes appropriate participation by qualified academic staff and appropriate forms of consultation with students.

### 7.3 Ethical Conduct

*The Applicant values and upholds integrity and ethical conduct.*

#### ***Benchmarks for assessing ethical conduct***

- 1. Disclosure of any past criminal convictions on the part of officers and directors relating to fraud or misrepresentation and of any past conduct of officers or directors that gives reasonable grounds to believe business will not be carried out in

accordance with conditions of Ministerial Consent and with integrity, honesty and in accordance with laws of general application in the province of Ontario.

2. Disclosure of any legal or administrative actions pending against the institution, any of the owners, officers, or administrators, by any federal, provincial, state, or municipal law enforcement agency.
3. If the Applicant or any of its officers and directors has or has had a registered private vocational school in Ontario, disclosure of instances of non-compliance with the *Private Vocational Schools Act*, R.S.O. 1990, c. P-26.
4. If the Applicant or any of its officers and directors has breached the rules governing student financing through the Ontario Student Assistance Program or any other government direct student financing program, disclosure of instances of non-compliance.
5. If the Applicant or any of its officers and directors operates or has operated in other jurisdictions, disclosure of any instances of non-compliance with relevant legislation in those jurisdictions.
6. If the Applicant or any of its officers and directors has or has ever operated a school in Ontario, the Applicant is free from criminal or summary offence convictions related to OSAP or requirements under the *Private Vocational Schools Act*.
7. An acceptable statement by the governing Board of the ethical standards relating to fair and honest business practices that will guide its conduct in the course of operations in Ontario and in other jurisdictions.

## 7.4 Student Protection

*The Applicant values and upholds integrity and ethical conduct in its relations with students.*

### **Benchmarks for assessing student protection**

1. Public reports, materials and advertising are produced in a full, accurate and truthful manner, and recruitment policies follow fair business practices.
2. Key information about the Applicant's organization, policies and programs is published in its academic year calendar and is otherwise readily available to students and the public, specifically including:
  - (a) the organization's mission and goals statement;
  - (b) a history of the organization and its

governance and academic structure;

- (c) a general description of each degree program (e.g., purpose, outcomes, length);
  - (d) the academic credentials of faculty and senior administrators; and
  - (e) individual descriptions of all subjects in these programs and their credit value.
3. Prior to registration, students are provided with and confirm their awareness of policies (and procedures) pertaining to:
    - (a) credit transfer arrangements for incoming students, prior learning assessment, entrance examinations;
    - (b) student support and services;
    - (c) the financial methods the organization has selected to ensure the repayment of unearned (pre-paid) tuition and fees owing to students in the event of institutional failure or student withdrawal.

## 7.5 Academic Freedom and Integrity

*The Applicant maintains an atmosphere in which academic freedom exists and in which students and academic staff are expected to display a high degree of intellectual independence. Academic activity is supported by policies, procedures and practices that encourage academic honesty and integrity.*

### **Benchmarks for assessing academic freedom and integrity**

1. The applicant has a policy on academic freedom that recognizes and protects the rights of individuals in their pursuit of knowledge without fear of reprisals by the applicant or by third parties, and the right of individuals to communicate acquired knowledge and the results of research freely.
2. When an organization has a mission founded on a specific philosophical, political, doctrinal, or sectarian world-view, or when students or staff are required to adhere to a statement of faith and/or a code of conduct, the applicant:
  - (a) has a policy that ensures staff and students are notified of the mission or requirement to adhere prior to employment or admission;
  - (b) has procedures in place to ensure that the principles of natural justice are followed in the event of alleged violations of any policy or contractual arrangement concerning any required statement of faith and/or code of conduct; and
  - (c) demonstrates that when teaching and learning are required to be done within the context of

and as an affirmation of a world-view, the organization's curriculum development, content, and delivery procedures and practices ensure an academic environment in which

- i) a full and balanced treatment of the commonly-held, academic body of knowledge, theories, and opinions with respect to the various individual subjects and general discipline areas which comprise the program of study is appreciated and fostered; and
  - ii) both students and faculty are expected and permitted to engage in an open dialogue with and about these various theories and opinions.
3. The applicant has an appropriate policy on the ownership of the intellectual products of employees and students.
  4. Where appropriate, the applicant upholds formal ethical research standards, as evidenced by policies on human research participants, the use of animals in research, and the management of research funds.
  5. The applicant has appropriate policies pertaining to academic honesty and procedures for their enforcement.
  6. The applicant provides an appropriate plan for informing students and faculty about and ensuring their understanding of the policies and procedures concerning academic honesty.

## 7.6 Financial Stability

*The Applicant demonstrates financial stability and the financial resources to provide a stable learning environment and to ensure that students can complete the program.*

### *Benchmarks for assessing financial stability*

1. A credible long-term business plan (normally five years) that addresses the Applicant's future educational, physical, and fiscal growth in Ontario and details the program to be offered in Ontario.
2. The required financial resources to provide the program for the period proposed (human, administrative, financial, technical, facilities, equipment) to achieve the stated learning outcomes.
3. A policy requiring the regular audit of the Applicant's financial methods, performance, and stability by an arm's-length professional accountant.

## 7.7 Dispute Resolution

*The Applicant has policies for dealing with disputes between the organization and its students, and between faculty and students.*

### *Benchmarks for assessing dispute resolution*

1. Institutional policies and procedures through which
  - (a) students' academic appeals, complaints, grievances, and/or other disputes
  - (b) complaints, grievances, and/or disputes of faculty, staff and administration, with respect to the policies required by the Board, can be dealt with in accordance with the following principles of natural justice:
    - i) individuals have a right to a fair and expeditious resolution of disputes;
    - ii) individuals have a right to know and understand the charges or complaints made against them;
    - iii) individuals have a right to be heard in response to charges or complaints made against them, before any disciplinary decision is taken;
    - iv) institutions have an obligation to deal with complaints or grievances according to clear and reasonable deadlines;
    - v) institutions have an obligation to establish and operate according to administrative processes that deal with disputes fairly and expeditiously at the informal level.
2. Students and employees are informed about and understand the policies and procedures for dispute resolution. To these ends, the Applicant's policies shall ensure that:
  - (a) charges or complaints against an individual are stated clearly and in writing;
  - (b) there is an administrative person(s) responsible for dealing with complaints and to whom complaints may be directed, and who may facilitate the informal and satisfactory resolution of disputes;
  - (c) there is a process for reviewing disputes and examining the evidence;
  - (d) there is provision for a final internal review by a body of persons not involved in the dispute in any way.

## 7.8 Organization Evaluation

*The quality of the operational and administrative aspects of the organization is assured by procedures for periodic evaluation that meet the requirements outlined below.*

### **Benchmarks for assessing organization evaluation**

1. The applicant has a formal, institutionally approved policy and procedure for the periodic review of its operational and administrative policies and procedures embodying the following characteristics:
  - a. organizational reviews at regular intervals, normally not exceeding five to seven years. The first such evaluation should occur before a request for renewal of ministerial consent
  - b. criteria for organizational review that include:
    - i. assessment of the continuing adequacy of the organization's mission statement and academic goals that accurately identify the academic character and aspirations of the organization;
    - ii. assessment of the continuing adequacy of the organization's governance structure and qualified administrative capacity necessary to organize and manage a competent institution of higher learning with appropriate participation by qualified academic staff and in consultation with students;
  - c. assessment of organization's ethical conduct and business practices in its dealings with administrative, academic and support staff, students, regulators, suppliers, and the public in general;
  - d. assessment of the continuing accuracy and completeness of the institution's public reports, materials and advertising and the key information about the organization and that it is readily available to potential and current students;
  - e. assessment of the organization's commitment to and the continuing appropriateness of its academic freedom and integrity policies in that they (i) recognize and protect the rights of individuals in their pursuit of knowledge; (ii) clearly define the ownership of the intellectual products of employees and students; (iii) uphold formal ethical research standards; and (iv) foster and enforce academic honesty;
  - f. assessment of the continued financial stability of the organization and that it has the

financial resources to provide a stable learning environment and to ensure that students can complete the program with the stated learning outcomes;

- g. assessment of the continuing appropriateness of the organization's dispute resolution policies and practices.

2. The organization review procedure includes:

#### (a) A Self-Study

A study undertaken by administrators, faculty members and staff of organization based on evidence relating to organizational performance against the criteria stated above, including strengths and weaknesses, desired improvements, and future directions.

#### (b) An Organization Evaluation Committee

A committee struck by the senior administration to evaluate the organization's operational and administrative activities, policies and procedures based on (a) the self-study and a site visit during which members of the committee normally meet with administrators, faculty members, students, graduates, and other relevant parties such as financial auditors, bankers, critical service providers to gather information. A majority of the members must have relevant expertise in the degree-granting environment, be from outside the institution, and be free of any conflict of interest.

#### (c) The Report of the Committee

The overarching purpose of the Organization Evaluation Committee report is to assess the appropriateness and quality of the organization's operation, policies and procedures, and to recommend any changes needed to strengthen that quality. The report must be addressed to the senior administration and be shared with the academic council and governing Board, together with a plan of action responding to the recommendations in the report.

## 7.9 Minister's Requirements

*The Applicant must adhere to the Minister's Applicant Acknowledgement and Agreement and provide evidence that it meets all requirements set out in the Minister's Directives and Guidelines for Applying for Ministerial Consent under the Post-Secondary Education Choice and Excellence Act, 2000, and in any regulations under the Act.<sup>4</sup>*

<sup>4</sup> These documents can be accessed through the "Related Topics" box on the home page of the Board's website, and

### **Benchmark's for assessing Minister's Requirements**

1. Evidence demonstrating satisfaction of requirements in the following matters:

- (a) Student transcript protection
- (b) Financial security
- (c) Tuition refunds
- (d) Student contracts
- (e) Awareness of policies affecting students
- (f) C redit transfer
- (g) Delivery of goods and services on payment.

## **8. PROGRAM REVIEW PROCESS**

### **8.1 Degree Program**

For the purposes of this handbook, a degree program is a prescribed set of courses/studies that culminates in mastery of the bodies of knowledge and skills appropriate to the degree-level standard in the disciplinary field of study.

In baccalaureate programs in arts and science, where the B.A. or B.Sc. degree title is awarded, a program is considered to be the comprehensive body of studies required to graduate with a specialization in a particular discipline – e.g., history, political science, psychology, economics, religious studies, biology, chemistry – or in a particular interdisciplinary program, such as international studies or women's studies. In professionally oriented subjects (some examples are: business, music, social work) or in religious vocation programs (some examples are: divinity, religious counselling, sacred music, missionary studies), where the degree title is usually specific to the field, the program is considered to be the comprehensive body of studies required to achieve that particular degree.

---

applicants must be thoroughly familiar with them. These are addressed in Part C of the *Submission Guidelines*, and the applicant's compliance with the requirements are determined by the Private Institutions Branch of the Ministry.

Graduate programs focus on a particular discipline or field of specialization within a discipline, and require more advanced and specialized knowledge, conceptual skill, independent research ability, and intellectual creativity than the degree programs that preceded them. In reviewing proposed doctoral-degree-level programs, and, where appropriate, master's-degree-level programs, the Board will expect the field(s) of specialization within a discipline to be identified and to see credible evidence of adequate strength in the proposed field(s) of specialization.

### **8.2 Quality Assessment Panels**

The quality of each proposed degree program, or any part thereof, will be assessed by a Quality Assessment Panel. The nature and complexity of the application will determine the number and balance of credentials and skills and background of quality assessors. A Quality Assessment Panel will normally consist of three members including the panel chair. The Board will select all quality assessors.

The applicant may nominate up to eight qualified persons from whom the Board may choose one or more to serve on the Quality Assessment Panel. The Board has sole discretion, however, to select all quality assessors for the application, without regard to the applicant's nominees.

When an applicant applies for consent to offer multiple programs, the Board will name a Quality Assessment Panel or Panels of a size and nature appropriate to the application. Among the factors the Board will consider are whether the program is new or being currently offered by the applicant, and the degree of affinity among the proposed programs.

### **8.3 Criteria for Quality Assessors**

Quality assessors should possess the qualifications and personal qualities to engender the confidence of the Board, the Minister, the public, accrediting bodies, relevant regulatory bodies, and degree-granting institutions. Quality assessors must:

- be committed to the principles and practices of quality assurance in postsecondary education;
- be recognized by their peers for having a broad outlook, open mind, and sound judgement;

- be free of any conflict of interest, in accordance with the Board's policy on conflict of interest for quality assessors; and
- have demonstrated skills in oral and written communication, preferably including experience of writing formal reports to deadlines.

The Board will seek to select highly qualified individuals as quality assessors who possess:

- an advanced academic credential related to the subject area under review (normally at the terminal level in the field);
- any required or desired professional credentials and/or related work experience of substantial depth and range;
- relevant academic experience such as administration, teaching, curriculum design and/or quality assessment experience (e.g., as appraisers for accrediting bodies or as reviewers of degree programs).

Chairs of Quality Assessment Panels for graduate program proposals will normally have the following additional qualifications:

- be an active scholar, normally at the rank of full professor;
- be currently/recently involved in graduate teaching and, as appropriate, in graduate thesis supervision or in graduate clinical or applied studies supervision;
- be experienced in the administration of graduate programs (e.g., as chair of a department with graduate programs, graduate program coordinator, chair of the graduate committee, member of an OGS/SSHRC/NSERC/MRC scholarship committee, member of a faculty or university graduate or research council or committee); and
- be an experienced committee member who can function objectively and effectively as chair of an assessment committee.

The Board will strive to name Quality Assessment Panels that reflect an appropriate mix of

academic/professional credentials and experience related to the field.

In establishing its roster of quality assessors, the Board may seek nominations of qualified individuals from the public and a wide variety of constituencies, including but not limited to the following:

- Ontario Council on Graduate Studies;
- Ontario universities and colleges;
- professional, accrediting and regulatory bodies within and outside of Ontario;
- postsecondary educational institutions outside Ontario; and
- institutions that offer religious vocation degree programs.

Suggestions for and self-nominations by qualified individuals are welcome.

## 8.4 Quality Assessment Panel Report

The primary obligation of the Quality Assessment Panel will be to provide its best judgement on the quality of the proposed program. In cases where the applicant is seeking consent to offer part of a degree program, the Quality Assessment Panel will provide its best judgement on the quality of the part program in the context of the whole program.

To this end, the Quality Assessment Panel is expected to assess applications against the criteria stated in chapter 9. The panel may also request additional information from applicants to assist it in its deliberations.

Under the coordination of the panel chair, the members of the Quality Assessment Panel will develop a report that must include at least the following information:

- an assessment of the application against each of the Board's standards and benchmarks stipulated in chapter 9;
- an assessment of the application against each of the criteria and requirements in regulation or stipulated by the Minister;
- assessment of the sufficiency, reliability and validity of the evidence provided by the

applicant;

- an assessment of evidence found during any site visit; and
- a recommendation, with reasons, on whether the proposed program meets the Board's and the Minister's criteria and is of sufficient academic quality to be offered to the people of Ontario.

### **8.5 Outcomes of Program Reviews**

The following are the anticipated outcomes of the Board's process regarding submissions for applied degree program approval:

- *recommendation to the Minister to grant consent, or*
- *recommendation to the Minister to deny consent.*

## 9. PROGRAM REVIEW STANDARDS

All applicants seeking Ministerial Consent to offer a degree program or any part thereof must undergo a program quality assessment to determine whether the proposed program meets the Board's criteria.

The following standards shall apply to the review of a variety of baccalaureate and graduate degree programs. Recognizing that there are several streams leading to baccalaureate and graduate degrees, including professional degrees at both levels, the Board has adopted standards that provide a reasonable consistency in the learning outcome standards expected of all programs and that recognize some diversity in the manner of achieving those standards.

The following program quality standards will apply to programs taught by various means, including courses or programs that are designed specially to serve students at a distance.

The Board will assess the quality of proposed degree programs in accordance with the following Board standards and ministerial requirements. In cases where the applicant seeks Ministerial Consent to offer a part of a degree program, the Board will assess the proposal in the context of the entire degree program.

### Board Standards:

- 9.1 Program Degree Level
- 9.2 Admissions, Promotion, Graduation
- 9.3 Program Content
- 9.4 Program Delivery
- 9.5 Capacity to Deliver
- 9.6 Credential Recognition
- 9.7 Regulation and Accreditation
- 9.8 Program Evaluation

All applications will be assessed against all of the Board's standards to evaluate their acceptability. Members of the Quality Assessment Panel may request additional information from applicants to assist assessors in their obligation to provide their best judgement on the quality of applications.

The Board will ask quality assessors to evaluate the extent to which each application meets the standards.

### Minimum Proportion of a Complete Program an Applicant Must Offer

Applications for consent to offer part of a degree program will be assessed in the context of the complete program. In cases where the organization seeking consent for part of a program does not offer a complete degree program (e.g., offers degree completion or a degree based on recognition of prior credits), the Board's minimum requirements for the portion of the complete degree that an applicant must offer at the site from which the student is to receive the degree are:

- for a baccalaureate degree, at least 25% (usually 30 full credits) of the program requirements;
- for graduate and professional programs, the institution must offer:
  - no less than 50% of the course requirements in terms of content and outcomes as it is normally offered in public or accredited private institutions;
  - any standard non-course requirements of the program as it is normally offered by public or accredited private institutions (e.g., comprehensive examinations, academic reports, research projects and/or a thesis); and
- for both undergraduate and graduate programs, the elements of a partial program that the degree granting institution offers must be those that are designed to provide the student with the most critical advanced knowledge and skill requirements of the discipline at the relevant degree level—that is, the terminal rather than the introductory or medial segments of the program.

### 9.1.1 Program Degree Level: Descriptions

The following descriptions are intended to capture the most general aspects of the respective degree levels. It is to be understood, however, that each of these degrees and degree levels applies to an extremely broad spectrum of disciplines and program types.

For example, some general and honours/specialist baccalaureate degrees are in fields that are very practically oriented (e.g., archaeology, chemistry, geology, microbiology, zoology), while some applied programs are in disciplines that are heavily knowledge and research based (e.g., applied psychology, applied mathematics, applied linguistics, agricultural and applied economics). The applied/non-applied distinction at this level is designed to capture the essential features of the differences between these two types of programs while respecting the fact that, whether a program is intended to prepare an individual either for immediate practice/employment in a field of practice or for further study in a discipline, each must meet a substantial and common set of outcomes that have historically been and continue to be critical to and shared by both types of programs within a degree-level educational environment.

At the master's and doctorate levels, the differences in program content and outcomes between the "traditional" degrees and those which have a designed applied focus are much subtler. This is usually evidenced by close ties with industry or professional organizations (such as external advisory committees, research ties, formal partnerships, and sponsorships), by the integration into the program of some practical elements (such as management, marketing, or law, information science), and by offering these in a manner that develops and reinforces communication and team skills through working in real or simulated occupational or professional environments. Separate skill and knowledge outcomes for professional and research degrees at the graduate level therefore, where the "applied" distinction is essentially lost, have not been retained. These degree levels are intended to provide increasingly higher levels of knowledge and skills in a discipline and the ability to apply these in any and all relevant occupational, professional and academic environments.

### GENERAL BACCALAUREATE DEGREE

General Baccalaureate degree programs are normally designed to require some conceptual sophistication, and specialized knowledge in at least one discipline or field.

Such programs typically require less intensive disciplinary specialization than an honours or specialist program and less preparation for employment in a field of practice than a program in an applied or professional area of study.

In addition to personal and intellectual growth, the programs may prepare students for some second-entry professional degree programs, employment in a variety of fields, or advanced entry into an honours or specialist program of study in the field.

Normally these programs do not prepare students for direct entry into graduate study. They are typically six to eight semesters in duration (normally 90 to 120 credits, or the equivalent).

### HONOURS/SPECIALIST BACCALAUREATE DEGREE

Baccalaureate degree programs in this category are normally designed to require more conceptual sophistication, specialized knowledge, and intellectual autonomy than a general degree program, and a deeper and broader disciplinary knowledge than a baccalaureate degree in an applied or professional area of study.

Students in honours or specialist programs learn by doing, with a focus on deepening their mastery of the knowledge and methods of the discipline. Such programs normally require students to prepare, under supervision, a terminal research paper, thesis, project, exhibition, or other research-based or performance-based exercises that demonstrate methodological competence and capacity for independent intellectual/creative work.

In addition to personal and intellectual growth, honours and specialist programs are primarily designed to prepare students for entry into graduate study in the field, second-entry professional degree programs, or employment in a variety of fields. They are typically eight semesters in duration (normally 120 credits, or the equivalent).

### **BACCALAUREATE DEGREE IN A PROFESSIONAL AREA OF STUDY**

Baccalaureate degree programs in this category are normally designed to require a level of conceptual sophistication, specialized knowledge, and intellectual autonomy similar to that in an honours or specialist degree program but with the disciplinary content oriented to a professional field of practice.

Students in professional programs learn by doing, with a focus on preparing for entry into a professional field of practice. Such programs incorporate a blend of theory and practice, and normally include a terminal project or other practice-based exercises intended to develop and demonstrate the student's readiness for employment in the professional field of practice.

Professions are often practiced within in a regulatory framework, and programs may require accreditation by a regulatory body or professional association.

In addition to personal and intellectual growth, the programs are primarily designed to prepare students for employment in the field of practice, second-entry professional degree programs, or, depending on the content of the program and the field, entry into either graduate study or bridging studies for an appropriate graduate program.

Classroom instruction is typically eight semesters or more in duration (normally 120 credits, or the equivalent) and may be supplemented by required professional experience (e.g., supervised practica or internships).

### **BACCALAUREATE DEGREE IN AN APPLIED AREA OF STUDY**

Baccalaureate degree programs in this category are normally designed to require a level of conceptual sophistication, specialized knowledge, and intellectual autonomy similar to that in an honours or specialist degree program but with the disciplinary content oriented to an occupational field of practice.

Students in applied programs learn by doing, with a focus on preparing for entry into an occupational field of practice. Such programs incorporate a blend

of theory and practice, and normally include a terminal project or other practice-based exercises intended to develop and demonstrate the student's readiness for employment in the occupational field of practice.

In addition to personal and intellectual growth, the programs are primarily designed to prepare students for employment in the field of practice, second-entry professional degree programs, or, depending on the content of the program and the field, entry into either graduate study or bridging studies for an appropriate graduate program.

Classroom instruction is typically eight semesters in duration (normally 120 credits, or the equivalent) and may be supplemented by required workplace experience (e.g., two to four supervised co-operative work terms).

### **MASTER'S DEGREE**

A **professional** master's degree program builds on knowledge and competencies acquired during related undergraduate study, and requires more specialized knowledge and intellectual autonomy than a baccalaureate degree program. Much of the study undertaken at the master's level will have been at, or informed by, the forefront of an academic or professional discipline.

Students will have shown originality in the application of knowledge, and they will understand how the boundaries of knowledge are advanced through research. They will be able to deal with complex issues both systematically and creatively, and they will show originality in tackling and solving problems.

Profession-oriented master's programs normally draw on students holding baccalaureate degrees or first professional degrees from varied academic backgrounds and provide them with a selection of courses and exercises intended to prepare them for a particular profession or field of practice or, if they are already involved in the profession or field, to extend their knowledge base and skills as professionals/ practitioners.

*Examples: MSW (Social Work), MHA (Health Administration), MPA (Public Administration), MHRM (Human Resource Management), M. Eng. (Engineering).*

A **research-oriented** master's degree program builds on knowledge and competencies acquired during related undergraduate study, and requires more specialized knowledge and intellectual autonomy than a baccalaureate degree program. Much of the study undertaken at the master's level will have been at, or informed by, the forefront of an academic or professional discipline.

Students will have shown originality in the application of knowledge, and they will understand how the boundaries of knowledge are advanced through research. They will be able to deal with complex issues both systematically and creatively, and they will show originality in tackling and solving problems.

Research-oriented master's programs are typically offered to graduates of related undergraduate or professional programs in the field or to students who have taken bridging studies to equip them for graduate study in the field; the focus is on developing the research, analytical, methodological, interpretive and expository skills necessary for doctoral studies or for leadership in society. Typically, programs are thesis-based and require the student to develop and demonstrate advanced research skills under supervision. Some programs are course-based and require students to demonstrate the necessary research, analytical, interpretive, methodological and expository skills in course exercises.

Examples: M.A. programs in the humanities and social sciences; M.Sc. programs, MAsc. (Engineering).

Graduates both professional and research-oriented master's degree programs will have the qualities needed for employment in circumstances requiring sound judgment, personal responsibility and initiative, in complex and unpredictable professional environments. Master's programs are typically three to five semesters in duration (normally 45-60 credits, or the equivalent).

## DOCTORAL DEGREE PROGRAM

A **professional** doctoral program builds on the knowledge and competencies in a field or discipline acquired during prior study, usually at the graduate level.

Study at the doctoral level is at the forefront of an academic or professional discipline.

Holders of the doctoral degree must have demonstrated a high degree of intellectual autonomy, an ability to conceptualise, design and implement projects for the generation of significant new knowledge and/or understanding, and their ability to create and interpret knowledge that extends the forefront of a discipline, usually through original research or creative activity.

Practice-oriented doctoral programs are of a more applied nature, relate to a professional or creative activity and, where there is an internship or exhibition requirement, may also require a dissertation. Doctoral programs with an orientation to practice typically involve more course work than doctoral programs with a more theoretical or disciplinary focus. Such programs lead to the award of a degree designation reflecting the field or discipline.

Examples: Ed.D. (Education), Mus. Doc. (Music), Psy.D. (Psychology).

A **research-oriented** doctoral program builds on the knowledge and competencies in a field or discipline acquired during prior study, usually at the graduate level.

Study at the doctoral level is at the forefront of an academic or professional discipline.

Holders of the doctoral degree must have demonstrated a high degree of intellectual autonomy, an ability to conceptualise, design and implement projects for the generation of significant new knowledge and/or understanding, and their ability to create and interpret knowledge that extends the forefront of a discipline, usually through original research or creative activity.

Research-oriented doctoral programs focus on the development of the conceptual and methodological knowledge and skills required to do original research and to make an original contribution to knowledge in the form of a dissertation. In some fields an internship or exhibition component may be required, but without diluting the significance of the dissertation as the primary demonstration of mastery. Such programs lead to the award the PhD.

*Examples: Ph.D. (Psychology), Ph.D. (Education), Ph.D. (Music)*

Graduates of both profession and research oriented doctoral programs will have the qualities needed for employment in circumstances requiring sound judgment, personal responsibility and initiative, in complex and unpredictable professional environments.

Holders of doctorates will have the qualities needed for employment requiring the ability to make informed judgements on complex issues in specialist fields, and innovation in tackling and solving problems.

A doctoral program is typically three to five years in length, depending on the field and the speed at which individuals progress through requirements. It may involve course work of varying lengths aimed at cultivating further conceptual depth or breadth.

### 9.1.2 Program Degree Level: Standards

#### GENERAL BACCALAUREATE DEGREE

*This degree is awarded to students who have demonstrated:*

##### Depth and Breadth of Knowledge in the Field

- a. a general knowledge and understanding of:
  - the principal assumptions, methodologies and applications of the discipline;
  - the main fields within the discipline, and
  - the discipline's relationship with other disciplines;
- b. an ability to evaluate and interpret new material relevant to the discipline's well-established framework of knowledge;
- c. some detailed knowledge in specialized areas;

##### Depth and Breadth of Knowledge Outside the Field

a more than introductory knowledge of the distinctive assumptions and modes of analysis of a discipline outside their main field of study and of the society and culture in which they live and work;

##### Conceptual and Methodological Awareness

a knowledge of the main methods of enquiry in their subject(s) that enables the student to:

- evaluate the appropriateness of different approaches to solving problems using well-established ideas and techniques in the field of study, and
- devise and sustain arguments and/or to solve problems using these methods;

##### Level of Analytical Skill

an ability to review, present, and interpret qualitative and quantitative data (as appropriate to the area of study), to develop lines of argument, and to make sound judgements in accordance with the major theories, concepts and methods of the subject(s) of study;

##### Level of Application of Knowledge

the ability to

- a. use a basic range of established techniques to analyse information and to evaluate the appropriateness of different approaches to solving problems related to their area(s) of study and/or work and to propose solutions to problems arising from that analysis; and
- b. make limited use of scholarly reviews and primary sources (e.g., refereed research articles and/or original materials) appropriate to their discipline;

##### Professional Capacity/ Autonomy

- a. qualities and transferable skills necessary to:
  - employment requiring the exercise of personal responsibility and decision-making in defined areas of accountability;
  - acting effectively with peers and under guidance of qualified practitioners;
- b. the ability to identify and address their own learning needs in changing circumstances, and to select an appropriate program of further study.

##### Level of Communications Skills

the ability to communicate the results of their study/work accurately and reliably, orally and in writing, to non-specialist audiences using structured and coherent arguments;

##### Awareness of Limits of Knowledge

an appreciation of the limits of their own knowledge, and how this might influence their

analyses and interpretations based on that knowledge.

### **HONOURS/SPECIALIST BACCALAUREATE DEGREE**

*This degree is awarded to students who have demonstrated:*

#### **Depth and Breadth of Knowledge in the Field**

- a. a specialized knowledge and critical understanding of:
  - the principal assumptions, methodologies and applications of the discipline and the field of practice and of the way in which these have developed;
  - the main fields within the discipline, and
  - the discipline's relationship and interaction with other disciplines;

primarily but not only as these relate to mastery of the discipline, at least some of which is informed by developments at the forefront of the discipline.
- b. an ability to interpret, critically evaluate, and apply new material relevant to the discipline;

#### **Depth and Breadth of Knowledge Outside the Field**

a more than introductory knowledge of the distinctive assumptions and modes of analysis of one or more disciplines outside their main field of study and of the society and culture in which they live and work;

#### **Conceptual and Methodological Awareness**

a conceptual understanding that enables the student to:

- devise and sustain arguments, and/or to solve problems, using ideas and techniques, some of which are at the forefront of a discipline; and
- describe and comment upon particular aspects of current research or equivalent advanced scholarship in the discipline and how these are relevant to the evolution of the discipline;

#### **Level of Analytical Skill**

an ability to review, present, and critically evaluate qualitative and quantitative data (as appropriate to the area of study), and apply underlying concepts, principles, and techniques of analysis, both within

and outside the context in which they were first studied and implemented;

#### **Level of Application of Knowledge**

the ability to

- a. use a range of established techniques and bodies of knowledge to initiate and undertake critical analysis of arguments, assumptions, abstract concepts and data (which may be incomplete);
- b. apply the methods and techniques of the discipline to extend their disciplinary competence;
- c. make judgements;
- d. to frame appropriate questions to achieve a solution — or to identify a range of solutions — to a problem or research question;
- e. initiate and carry out discipline related projects; and
- f. make critical use of scholarly reviews and primary sources (e.g., refereed research articles and/or original materials appropriate to their discipline);

#### **Professional Capacity/ Autonomy**

- a. qualities and transferable skills necessary for:
  - employment requiring the exercise of initiative, responsibility and accountability in both personal and group contexts;
  - developing leadership and management skills;
  - decision-making in complex and unpredictable contexts;
- b. the ability to manage their own learning in changing circumstances, both within and without the discipline, and to select an appropriate program of further study.

#### **Level of Communications Skills**

the ability to communicate information, arguments, and analyses accurately and reliably, orally and in writing, to specialist and non-specialist audiences, using structured and coherent arguments, and where appropriate informed by key concepts and techniques of the discipline;

#### **Awareness of Limits of Knowledge**

an appreciation of the uncertainty, ambiguity and limits of knowledge, and how this might influence analyses and interpretations based on that knowledge.

## BACCALAUREATE DEGREE IN A PROFESSIONAL AREA OF STUDY

*This degree is awarded to students who have demonstrated:*

### Depth and Breadth of Knowledge in the Field

- a. a specialized knowledge and critical understanding of:
  - the principal assumptions, methodologies and applications of the discipline and the field of practice and of the way in which these have developed;
  - the main fields within the discipline, and
  - the discipline's relationship and interaction with other disciplines;
 primarily but not only as these relate to mastery of the field of professional practice, at least some of which is informed by developments or needs of the field of practice and/or trends in the discipline.
- b. an ability to interpret and to critically evaluate and apply new material relevant to the field of professional practice;

### Depth and Breadth of Knowledge Outside the Field

a more than introductory knowledge of the distinctive assumptions and modes of analysis of one or more disciplines outside their main field of study and of the society and culture in which they live and work;

### Conceptual and Methodological Awareness

a conceptual understanding that enables the student to:

- devise and sustain arguments, and/or to solve practice-related problems, using ideas and techniques, some of which are at the forefront of a discipline or field of practice; and
- describe and comment upon particular aspects of current research or equivalent advanced scholarship in the discipline and/or profession and how these are relevant to the field of professional practice;

### Level of Analytical Skill

an ability to review, present, and critically evaluate qualitative and quantitative data (as appropriate to the area of study), and apply underlying concepts,

principles, and techniques of analysis, both within and outside the context in which they were first studied and practiced, particularly within a professional field of practice.

### Level of Application of Knowledge

the ability to

- a. use a range of established techniques and bodies of knowledge to initiate and undertake critical analysis of arguments, assumptions, abstract concepts and data (which may be incomplete);
- b. apply the methods and techniques of the discipline and practice-related experience to extend their professional competence;
- c. make judgements;
- d. to frame appropriate questions to achieve a solution — or to identify a range of solutions — to a problem in a professional context;
- e. initiate and carry out professional projects; and
- f. make critical and practical use of scholarly and professional reviews and primary sources (e.g., refereed research articles and/or original materials appropriate to their discipline and field of practice);

### Professional Capacity/ Autonomy

- a. qualities and transferable skills necessary for:
  - employment requiring the exercise of initiative, responsibility and accountability in both personal and group contexts;
  - developing leadership and management skills;
  - decision-making in complex and unpredictable contexts;
- b. the ability to manage their own learning in changing circumstances, both within and without the discipline and profession, and to select an appropriate program of further study.

### Level of Communications Skills

the ability to communicate information, arguments, and analyses accurately and reliably, orally and in writing, to employers, team members, clients, consumers, and others, using structured and coherent arguments, and where appropriate informed by key concepts and techniques of the discipline and/or field of practice;

### Awareness of Limits of Knowledge

an appreciation of the uncertainty, ambiguity and limits of knowledge, and how this might influence analyses and applications based on that knowledge.

## **BACCALAUREATE DEGREE IN AN APPLIED AREA OF STUDY**

*This degree is awarded to students who have demonstrated:*

### **Depth and Breadth of Knowledge in the Field**

- a. a specialized knowledge and critical understanding of:
  - the principal assumptions, methodologies and applications of the discipline and the field of practice and of the way in which these have developed;
  - the main fields within the discipline, and
  - the discipline's relationship and interaction with other disciplines;
 primarily but not only as these relate to mastery of the field of occupational practice, at least some of which is informed by developments or needs of the field of practice and/or trends in the discipline.
- b. an ability to interpret and to critically evaluate and apply new material relevant to the field of occupational practice;

### **Depth and Breadth of Knowledge Outside the Field**

a more than introductory knowledge of the distinctive assumptions and modes of analysis of one or more disciplines outside their main field of study and of the society and culture in which they live and work;

### **Conceptual and Methodological Awareness**

a conceptual understanding that enables the student to:

- devise and sustain arguments, and/or to solve practice-related problems, using ideas and techniques, some of which are at the forefront of a discipline or field of practice; and
- describe and comment upon particular aspects of current research or equivalent advanced scholarship in the discipline and/or profession and how these are relevant to the field of occupational practice;

### **Level of Analytical Skills**

an ability to review, present, and critically evaluate qualitative and quantitative data (as appropriate to the area of study), and apply underlying concepts,

principles, and techniques of analysis, both within and outside the context in which they were first studied and practiced, particularly within an occupational field of practice.

### **Level of Application of Knowledge**

the ability to

- a. use a range of established techniques and bodies of knowledge to initiate and undertake critical analysis of arguments, assumptions, abstract concepts and data (which may be incomplete);
- b. apply the methods and techniques of the discipline and practice-related experience to extend their occupational competence;
- c. make judgements;
- d. to frame appropriate questions to achieve a solution — or to identify a range of solutions — to a problem in an occupational context;
- e. initiate and carry out occupational projects; and
- f. make critical and practical use of scholarly and professional reviews and primary sources (e.g., refereed research articles and/or original materials appropriate to their discipline and field of practice);

### **Professional Capacity/ Autonomy**

- a. qualities and transferable skills necessary for:
  - employment requiring the exercise of initiative, responsibility and accountability in both personal and group contexts;
  - developing leadership and management skills;
  - decision-making in complex and unpredictable contexts;
- b. the ability to manage their own learning in changing circumstances, both within and without the discipline and occupation, and to select an appropriate program of further study.

### **Level of Communications Skills**

the ability to communicate information, arguments, and analyses accurately and reliably, orally and in writing, to employers, team members, clients, consumers, and others, using structured and coherent arguments, and where appropriate informed by key concepts and techniques of the discipline and/or field of practice;

### **Awareness of Limits of Knowledge**

an appreciation of the uncertainty, ambiguity and limits of knowledge, and how this might influence analyses and applications based on that knowledge.

## MASTER'S DEGREE

*This degree extends the skills associated with the Baccalaureate degree and is awarded to students who have demonstrated:*

### Depth and Breadth of Knowledge in the Field

a systematic understanding of knowledge, and a critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights, much of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of their academic discipline, field of study, or area of professional practice;

### Depth and Breadth of Knowledge Outside the Field

sufficient breadth and depth of knowledge outside the field and/or discipline when necessary for research projects or solutions to professional problems;

### Conceptual and Methodological Awareness

- a. originality in the application of knowledge, together with a practical understanding of how established techniques of research and inquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in the discipline;
- b. competence in a range of standard and specialized research or equivalent tools and techniques of enquiry;
- c. conceptual understanding that enables the student (i) to evaluate critically current research and advanced scholarship in the discipline, and (ii) to evaluate methodologies and develop critiques of them and, where appropriate, to propose new hypotheses and/or interpretations;

### Level of Analytical Skill

- a. a comprehensive understanding and creative application of concepts, principles and techniques in their own research, advanced scholarship or field of practice;
- b. the ability to deal with complex issues and make judgements based on established principles and techniques;

### Level of Application of Knowledge

self-direction and originality in tackling and solving problems, and act autonomously in planning and implementing tasks at a professional or equivalent level;

### Professional Capacity/ Autonomy

- a. the ability to self-evaluate and take responsibility to continue to advance their knowledge and understanding, and to develop new skills to a high level;
- b. the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring the exercise of initiative and personal responsibility and accountability, decision making in complex and unpredictable situations, and the independent learning required for continuing professional development;

### Level of Communications Skills

the ability to communicate issues and conclusions clearly to specialist and non-specialist audiences;

### Awareness of Limits of Knowledge

an appreciation of the complexity of knowledge and understanding and of the potential contributions made by diverse interpretations, methods, and disciplines.

## DOCTORAL DEGREE

*This degree extends the skills associated with the Master's degree and is awarded to students who have demonstrated:*

### Depth and Breadth of Knowledge in the Field

a thorough understanding of a substantial body of knowledge which is at the forefront of their academic discipline or area of professional practice;

### Depth and Breadth of Knowledge Outside the Field

sufficient breadth and depth of knowledge outside the field and/or discipline when necessary for research projects or solutions to professional problems;

### Conceptual and Methodological Awareness

- a. the ability to conceptualize, design, and implement projects for the generation of new knowledge, applications, or understanding at the forefront of the discipline, and to adjust the project design in the light of unforeseen problems;
- b. a significant range of skills, techniques, tool, practices and/or materials which are associated with the field of learning;

- c. the ability to develop new skills, techniques, tools, practices, and/or materials;
- d. a detailed conceptual and practical understanding of applicable techniques for research and advanced academic inquiry;

#### **Level of Analytical Skill**

- a. the ability to make informed judgements on complex issues in specialist fields, often in the absence of complete data and sometimes requiring new methods or hypotheses;
- b. the ability to create and interpret new knowledge, through original research, or other advanced scholarship, of a quality to satisfy peer review, extend the forefront of the discipline, and merit publication;

#### **Level of Application of Knowledge**

the capacity to undertake pure and/or applied research and development at an advanced level, to contribute to the development of academic or professional skills, techniques, tool, practices, ideas, approaches, and/or materials;

#### **Professional Capacity/ Autonomy**

- a. the independence to remain academically and professionally engaged and current, including the ability to evaluate the broader implications of applying knowledge to particular contexts;
- b. the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring the exercise of personal responsibility and largely autonomous initiative in complex and unpredictable situations, in professional or equivalent environments;

#### **Level of Communications Skills**

the ability to communicate complex and/or ambiguous ideas and conclusions clearly and effectively to specialist and non-specialist audiences;

#### **Awareness of Limits of Knowledge**

a full appreciation of the complexity of knowledge and understanding and of the potential contributions made by diverse interpretations, methods, and disciplines.

#### **Benchmarks for assessing program degree level**

- 1. The program meets or exceeds the learning outcome standards specified in the appropriate

program degree-level standard, and the applicant demonstrates how the program meets the standards.

- 2. Assessment of individual student work in the terminal stage of the program, that reflects exemplary, average, and minimally acceptable performance, demonstrates that the degree-level standard has been achieved.

## **9.2 Admissions, Promotion, Graduation**

*The applicant has admissions, promotion and graduation requirements for the proposed program consistent with the postsecondary character of degree-granting organizations and comparable with those of members of the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada.*

#### **Benchmarks for assessing admissions, promotion and graduation**

- 1. Admission requirements are appropriate to the learning outcome goals of the program and the degree-level standard. Admission to a baccalaureate degree in an applied area of study requires at a minimum an Ontario Secondary School Diploma or equivalent, six university or university/college courses at the Grade 12 level, a *minimum* average of 65 per cent, and additional requirements as programs require.
- 2. "Mature students" have demonstrated academic abilities equivalent to those of Ontario high school graduates, verified by successful completion of courses at the postsecondary level or an entrance examination. ("Mature students" are applicants who have not achieved the Ontario Secondary School Diploma [OSSD] or its equivalent, who are at least 19 years of age on or before the commencement of the program in which they intend to enrol.)

*Advanced Standing* of specialist audiences;

- 3. Applicants who propose to award any type of advanced standing into the proposed program are required to have policies and procedures pertaining to credit/ credential recognition that relate to the type of advanced standing being proposed (including any bridging requirements for certificate/diploma to enter degree programs), and such policies must:

- a) have as a principal criterion that the credits accepted for admission to a degree program are in proportion to the affinity with and/or

- applicability to the specialist content of the program and other curricular requirements;
- b) be fair (award credit where credit is due), reasonable (do not award credit where none is due), and consistent;
  - c) identify the bases on which such decisions are made, including:
    - i) the minimum acceptable grade or achievement level;
    - ii) the requirements for comparability of program content of earlier studies with that of the proposed program;
    - iii) the procedures for determining the credit to be awarded;
    - iv) the procedures that students will follow when requesting credit and appealing transfer of credit decisions;
    - v) for all programs (undergraduate and graduate), the limit on the number of credits that will be awarded for prior degree<sup>5</sup> level study toward the degree program;
    - vi) for undergraduate programs, the limit on the number of credits that will be awarded for prior diploma level study, with and without affinity<sup>6</sup>, toward the degree program (excluding any work experience/internship requirements) such that the advanced standing to be awarded does not exceed:
      - 67 % credit for a 3-year degree program from a completed 3-year diploma program
      - 53 % degree level credit for a 3-year degree program from a completed 2-year diploma program
      - 65 % degree level credit for a 4-year degree program from a completed 3-year diploma program
      - 40 % degree level credit for a 4-year degree program from a completed 2-year diploma program.<sup>7</sup>
  - d) require in all cases a gap analysis<sup>8</sup> of the program content and outcomes of the studies for which transfer credit is being awarded and require that all gap analyses be retained for review;
  - e) ensure that the degree level standard and all of the program learning outcome standards of the degree program are met; and
  - f) identify any requirements for bridging studies that facilitate entry into the proposed program;
4. Administrative procedures for assessing advanced standing in a degree program, must include the following elements:<sup>9</sup>
    - a) Credit awards and their transcript entries should be monitored to avoid giving credit twice for the same learning.
    - b) Policies and procedures applied to assessment, including provision for appeal, should be fully disclosed and prominently available.
    - c) All personnel involved in the assessment of learning should receive adequate training for the functions they perform, and there should be provision for their continued professional development.
    - d) Advanced standing decisions should be regularly monitored, reviewed, and evaluated to ensure their ongoing validity for the degree program.
  5. Where the applicant proposes, for the purposes of an articulation agreement between a particular program of non-degree study and the proposed degree program,

<sup>5</sup> Credits recognized for advanced standing must be earned at a postsecondary institution which is (i) a Canadian public university, (ii) an organization authorized to offer the degree program on the basis of an Ontario Ministerial consent; or (iii) an organization that has the legal authority to grant degrees, is accredited by a recognized accrediting body where relevant, applies quality assurance policies to programs consistent with the program evaluation policy requirements of the Board, and is a member of a recognized association of degree-granting institutions, or (iv) another institution acceptable to the Board.

<sup>6</sup> Course affinity is based on similarity of course content and the level of learning outcomes.

<sup>7</sup> Applicants wishing to exceed these policy limits must satisfy the requirements in benchmark 5.

<sup>8</sup> *Gap analysis*: an analysis that a) compares the prior courses, program elements, or program outcomes proposed for credit recognition with the program outcomes of the degree program to be taken, b) identifies the gaps in the student's knowledge and skills relative to the knowledge and skills required for the degree program, and c) indicates how the gaps will be addressed.

<sup>9</sup> Adapted from the "Standards for Quality Assurance in PLAR", adopted by the Council on Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL), "Principles and Standards for Recognition of Prior Learning: Academic Principles" of the Alberta Council on Admissions and Transfers (ACAT), PLA Implementation Guidelines of British Columbia's Centre for Curriculum Transfer and Technology.

- to exceed the limits identified in 3 c vi, and/or
  - bridging studies to facilitate advanced standing
- the applicant submits a detailed gap analysis that demonstrates
- a) the academic integrity of the degree program, and
  - b) that the degree level standard and degree program learning outcomes are met.

#### Prior Learning Assessment

6. Applicants proposing to award credit for "life experience" (i.e., learning that takes place outside formal post-secondary educational institutions, for example: work experiences, self-directed study, volunteer activities and community work, non-credit courses, corporate training programs, travel or hobbies)

- a) must submit their policies and procedures pertaining to prior learning assessment, which must include at a minimum:
  - (i) key principles informing the prior learning assessment;
  - (ii) methodology used (portfolio assessment, examination challenge for credit);
  - (iii) internal procedures for portfolio assessment;
  - (iv) policies on credit limits, appeals, and confidentiality;
  - (v) assessment documents, guidelines, brochures for potential students; and
- b) must ensure that the degree level standard and program learning outcomes are met.

In such cases the applicant will be required to demonstrate that:

- (i) Credit will be awarded only for learning and not for experience.
- (ii) Credit will be awarded only for degree-level learning.
- (iii) The determination of competence levels and credit awards will be made by academic experts in the appropriate subject matter.

The Board will not recommend proposals that:

- a) propose to offer any credits for "life experience", unless that experience is assessed for its appropriate learning value to the specific degree program;

- b) propose to waive comprehensive examinations, academic reports, research projects and/or thesis, if these are standard requirements of the program;
- c) propose to award advanced standing for more than 50% of the total number of the credits of the program based on prior learning assessment;
- d) do not require that at least 50% of the individuals enrolled in a program at any given time are actively taking required elements of that program.

#### All Advanced Standing

7. Whether advanced standing decisions are based on credit transfer/credential recognition or prior learning assessment, the following administrative procedures must be in place:
  - a. Credit awards and their transcript entries should be monitored to avoid giving credit twice for the same learning.
  - b. Policies and procedures applied to assessment, including provision for appeal, should be fully disclosed and prominently available.
  - c. All personnel involved in the assessment of learning should receive adequate training for the functions they perform, and there should be provision for their continued professional development.
  - d. Advanced standing decisions should be regularly monitored, reviewed, and evaluated to ensure their ongoing validity for the degree program.<sup>10</sup>
8. Promotion and graduation requirements are consistent with the learning outcome goals of the program and the degree-level standard, and include:

For both undergraduate and graduate degree programs:

<sup>10</sup> Adapted from the "Standards for Quality Assurance in PLAR", adopted by the Council on Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL). Other models that can be used are: "Principles and Standards for Recognition of Prior Learning: Academic Principles" of the Alberta Council on Admissions and Transfers (ACAT); PLA Implementation Guidelines of British Columbia's Centre for Curriculum Transfer and Technology.

- (a) appropriate policies governing academic remediation, sanctions, and suspension for students who do not meet minimum achievement requirements;
- (b) a grading system that is easily understandable, meaningful and convertible to students, other postsecondary institutions, and potential employers, whether expressed as letter grades, percentages or grade points;

and for undergraduate degree programs:

- (c) minimum overall average acceptable achievement (across all degree requirements, including the breadth and discipline-related requirements) for progression in the program not lower than the level typically designated by C- or 60 - 62%;
- (d) minimum overall average acceptable achievement in discipline-related requirements for progression in the program not lower than the level typically designated by C- or 60 - 62%;
- (e) a higher level of overall achievement expected in the main field or discipline of study than the overall average; and
- (f) regardless of the grading scheme used (letter grade, grade point average, and/or percentage), and as appropriate to the introductory, medial, or terminal stages of the program, acceptable performance corresponds to student work that demonstrates the degree level standard, i.e.,:
  - knowledge and/or critical understanding of
    - the principal assumptions, methods and applications of the discipline/field of practice,
    - the main fields within the discipline and the discipline's relationship and interaction with other disciplines;
  - an ability to
    - interpret and to critically evaluate new material relevant to the discipline/field of practice;
    - devise and sustain arguments, and/or to solve practice-related problems using the methods of the discipline/field of practice;
    - review, present, and critically evaluate scholarly and professional

reviews and primary sources, data, arguments, assumptions, and abstract concepts,

- frame appropriate questions to solve a research question or professional problem;
- communicate clearly;
- an appreciation of the uncertainty, ambiguity and limits of the students knowledge and/or of knowledge itself, and how this might influence analyses and interpretations based on that knowledge;

and for graduate degree programs:

- (a) minimum acceptable achievement for courses and other requirements applicable to the accumulation of credit toward the degree not lower than the level typically designated by B- or 70 - 72%; and
- (b) regardless of the grading scheme used (letter grade, grade point average, and/or percentage), acceptable performance corresponds to student work that demonstrates:
  - conceptual and critical understanding of advanced scholarship in the discipline/profession;
  - competence with the methods of the discipline/profession;
  - self-direction and originality in the application of knowledge and methods;
  - an ability to communicate clearly; and
  - an appreciation of the complexity of knowledge and of the potential contributions made by diverse interpretations, methods, and disciplines.

### 9.3 Program Content

- a) *The content of the program, in both subject matter and outcome standards, meets the degree-level standard.*
- b) *The program offers an education of sufficient breadth and rigour to be comparable to similar programs offered by institutions that meet recognized standards in Ontario and in other jurisdictions.*
- c) *The curriculum is current and reflects the state of knowledge in the field, or fields in the case of interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary programs.*
- d) *In baccalaureate programs with an applied focus, the program ensures an appropriate balance of theory and practice, including any appropriate work*

experience, field placement, or internship dimensions either required by the profession or material to the quality of the education.

e) In baccalaureate degree programs, the following breadth requirement is respected: The instructional program ensures an appropriate balance of professional and liberal studies in accordance with the following guidelines:

i) No more than 80 per cent of the program hours are in courses in the professional or main field of study (all required elements in theory, practice, and corollary disciplines).

ii) At least 20 per cent of the program hours<sup>11</sup> in degree-level courses are outside the professional or main field of study, of which some are free electives, to ensure that students are aware (a) of the distinctive assumptions and modes of analysis of at least one discipline outside their main field of study, and (b) of the society and culture in which they live and work.

iii) At the applicant's option, the breadth component of the program may be subdivided to accommodate complementary degree-level courses, where one-quarter of the breadth program hours may be in complementary degree-level courses that may be linked to the main field of study (e.g., the history/economics/ethics of the main field of study).

f) Any course specified as a program requirement in a baccalaureate program may not be used to satisfy the breadth requirement.

g) In doctoral-degree-level programs and, where appropriate, master's-degree-level programs, fields (areas of program specialization) are identified.

h) Research-focused degree programs provide sufficient opportunities and support for research and other scholarly activity as well as interaction with other scholars.

<sup>11</sup> "Program hours" refers to all contact hours between instructor and student, excluding work term components of the program. In the health sciences field and other regulated professions, "program hours" excludes work term components as well as clinical practice components of programs. A clinical practice component of a program is required for program completion and provides the student with regular scheduled time for a non-simulated, continuously supervised practice of the profession. For only those proposed programs which incorporate a laboratory component, the Board may consider a calculation of the program breadth requirement based on program credits as opposed to program hours. For the conversion of program hours to program credits to be considered by the Board, see the *Submission Guidelines for Private Applicants*.

### **Benchmarks for assessing program content**

1. For undergraduate programs in applied fields of study, an appropriately qualified and representative Program Advisory Committee exists to ensure that the curriculum is current and reflects the state of knowledge in the field(s) and the needs of the field(s) of practice.
2. Learning outcomes and standards in the subjects/courses in the program demonstrate how graduates will be prepared with the knowledge and skills appropriate to the degree-level standard, and:
  - (a) meet the requirements or standards set by any relevant professional or accrediting body;
  - (b) meet or exceed the requirements in the same subjects for similar degree programs in Ontario and in other jurisdictions;
  - (c) meet or exceed the requirements of the field of study and/or practice.
3. Courses (including breadth courses) provide exposure to increasingly complex theory at the degree level and, in applied or professional courses, the application of that theory to practice and the demands of practice in the field.
4. The time allotments assigned to the program as a whole and to components in the program are appropriate to the stated learning outcomes.
5. The breadth requirement component meets the standard in time and content.
6. The type and frequency of assessments of student learning are commensurate with the stated learning outcomes and provide appropriate information to students about their achievement levels.
7. Any work experience, field placement, or internship requirements have appropriate, articulated learning outcomes and a method for joint instructor and employer/supervisor assessment leading to the assignment of a grade.

## **9.4 Program Delivery**

*The delivery methods will achieve the proposed learning outcomes at the degree-level standard.*

### **Benchmarks for assessing program delivery**

1. The delivery methods and their quality assurance policies facilitate and/or enhance the proposed learning outcomes.
2. Course design and delivery methods are appropriate to course content.
3. The applicant has the expertise and resources to support the proposed delivery methods and to ensure their effectiveness.

4. The applicant's assessment of the quality and effectiveness of the delivery methods includes consideration of standardized and regular feedback from students.
5. The delivery methods contribute to and enhance the creation of academic community among students and between students and faculty.
6. Policies pertaining to technology-based, computer-based, and web-based learning modes of delivery ensure:
  - (a) student and faculty preparation and orientation;
  - (b) reliable, sufficient, and scalable course-management systems;
  - (c) accessible technical assistance for students and faculty;
  - (d) appropriate hardware, software, and other technological resources and media; and
  - (e) well-maintained and current technology and equipment.

## 9.5 Capacity to Deliver

*The applicant has the legal characteristics, governance structure, and administrative capacity necessary to organize and manage a competent institution of higher learning and the capacity to deliver the quality of education necessary for students to attain the stated and necessary learning outcomes.*

### **Benchmarks for assessing capacity to deliver**

1. The applicant provides for reasonable student and faculty access to learning and information resources (such as library, databases, computing, classroom equipment and laboratory facilities) sufficient in scope, quality, currency, and kind to support students and faculty in the program.
2. The applicant makes a commitment to provide and maintain necessary learning and other resources, and to supplement them as necessary.
3. The applicant provides for reasonable student access to an appropriate range of academic support services, for example, academic counselling, tutoring, career counselling, and placement services.
4. Satisfactory policies pertaining to faculty are in place, including policies that:
  - (a) define the academic/professional credentials required of present and future faculty teaching all courses in the program (see benchmarks 14-20 below).
  - (b) require the applicant to have on file evidence, supplied direct to the applicant from the granting agency, of the highest academic credential and any required professional credential claimed by faculty members;
  - (c) require the regular review of faculty performance, including student evaluation of teaching and/or supervision;
  - (d) identify the means of ensuring that faculty knowledge of the field is current;
  - (e) pertain to faculty teaching and supervision loads, and availability to students; and
  - (f) support the professional development of faculty including the promotion of curricular and instructional innovation, as well as technological skills, where appropriate.
5. The applicant has academic and other staff in sufficient numbers to develop and deliver the program and to meet the demands of the projected student enrolment. The required minimum faculty and staff numbers will depend upon the method of delivery, enrolments, and the complexity or variety of specializations.

To satisfy the following benchmarks, and in compliance with the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, the applicant has obtained the written consent of individual faculty members or others to submit their CVs to the Board.

6. Exceptions to benchmarks 11, 12, 13, 16, or 17 below must be (a) based on the absence of a related program credential in a university or other extraordinary circumstances, and (b) justified in writing with specific reference to the Board's Capacity to Deliver benchmarks and approved by the applicant's President/CEO or, on explicit delegation, the applicant's senior academic officer. The signed document must be kept on file for review at the time of any request for renewed consent.
7. The faculty teaching all components of the program and, where appropriate, acting as thesis/dissertation supervisors and/or members of examining committees consist of (a) persons with appropriate academic qualifications and fields of expertise, and (b) where relevant, practitioners with required professional credentials and related work experience.

### Undergraduate Programs

8. All faculty teaching in the professional or main field of study (a) hold an academic credential at least one degree higher than that offered by the program in the field or in a closely related field/discipline and (b) no fewer than 50 percent of the faculty hold the terminal academic credential in the field or in a closely related field/discipline.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup> The doctorate is normally the terminal academic credential in all fields or disciplines with the exception of

9. All faculty teaching courses outside the professional or main field of study (breadth courses, whether linked or not linked to the main field) (a) hold an academic credential at least one degree higher than that offered by the program in the field or in a closely related field/discipline and (b) no fewer than 50 percent of the faculty hold the terminal academic credential in the field or in a closely related field/discipline.

#### Graduate Programs

10. The applicant identifies the fields or specializations to be covered in the program.
11. The applicant demonstrates that it has a sufficient number of qualified faculty to offer the program and the designated fields in the program.
12. No fewer than 80 percent of the faculty teaching in the program hold the terminal academic credential in the field or in a closely related field/discipline or have substantial records of scholarly contributions to the field/discipline.
13. Faculty members have records demonstrating their contribution to the advancement of the field/discipline through peer-reviewed research/scholarship or exhibitions or professional activity.

## 9.6 Credential Recognition

*While meeting particular needs, programs are designed to maximize graduates' potential for lifelong learning as well as promotion in their field. Accordingly:*

- a) *The program's learning outcomes and standards are sufficiently clear and at a level that will facilitate appropriate recognition of the credential by other postsecondary institutions.*
- b) *Where appropriate, and without distorting the main purposes of the program, courses or curricular elements in it are designed to facilitate credit transfer recognition by other postsecondary institutions.*

#### **Benchmarks for assessing credential recognition**

1. The applicant submits an explanation of how the design of the program meets this standard.

---

*studio disciplines where a master's degree in the field/discipline is more typical. The Board expects that the faculty will hold the terminal academic credential: (a) in the same field/discipline area as the proposed program area, or (b) in a field/discipline which can be shown to be closely related in content, or (c) with a graduate level speciality in the same field/discipline.*

2. Where appropriate, the applicant consults with employers, relevant occupational groups, professional colleges, and other postsecondary education organizations with respect to their recognition of the credential and their assessment of whether the credential will contribute to the professional advancement of the graduate.

## 9.7 Regulation and Accreditation

*Learning outcomes and standards in courses and other requirements for graduation in programs leading to occupations that are subject to government regulations are designed to prepare students to meet the requirements of the relevant regulatory body.*

#### **Benchmark for assessing regulation and accreditation**

1. The applicant submits documentation related to its consultations with:
  - (a) relevant regulatory bodies regarding those requirements for entry into practice; and
  - (b) where applicable, the accrediting agency specified by the regulatory body.

## 9.8 Program Evaluation

*The quality of the proposed program is assured by procedures for periodic evaluation that meet the requirements outlined below.<sup>13</sup>*

#### **Benchmarks for assessing program evaluation**

3. The applicant has a formal, institutionally approved policy and procedure for the periodic review of programs embodying the following characteristics:
  - (a) program reviews at regular intervals, normally not exceeding five to seven years. The first such evaluation should occur before a request for renewal of Ministerial Consent;
  - (b) criteria for program reviews that include:
    - i) assessment of the continuing consistency of the program with the organization's

---

<sup>13</sup> With amendments to reflect the learning outcomes orientation of the Board's statements, the following benchmarks are based on the criteria employed by Ontario public universities and Redeemer University College. See UPAC Audit Guidelines, "Methodology for the audit of undergraduate program reviews", 1998-02-05, and OCGS By-laws, and Procedures Governing Appraisals, 2001-08.

- mission, educational goals, and long-range plan;
- ii) assessment of the learning outcome achievements of students/graduates by comparison with:
    - (1) the program's stated learning outcome goals and standards;
    - (2) the degree-level standard;
    - (3) the opinions of employers, students/graduates; and
    - (4) the standards of any related regulatory, accrediting or professional association;
  - (c) where appropriate, assessment of (i) graduate employment rates, (ii) graduate satisfaction level, (iii) employer satisfaction level, (iv) student satisfaction level, (v) graduation rate, (vi) the default rate on the Ontario Student Assistance Program or other student loan plan and, in the case of graduate programs, (vii) time to completion;
  - (d) assessment of the continuing relevance of the program to the field of practice it serves, including evidence of revisions made to adapt to changes in the field of practice;
  - (e) assessment of the continuing appropriateness of the method of delivery and curriculum for the program's educational goals and standards;
  - (f) assessment of the continuing appropriateness of admission requirements (i.e., achievement level, subject preparation) for the program's educational goals and standards;
  - (g) assessment of the continuing appropriateness of the program's structure, method of delivery, and curriculum for its educational goals and standards;
  - (h) assessment of the continuing adequacy of the methods used for evaluating student progress and achievement;
  - (i) assessment of the efficient and effective utilization and adequacy of existing human, physical, technological, and financial resources;
  - (j) indicators of faculty performance, including the quality of teaching and supervision and demonstrable currency in the field of specialization; and
  - (k) assessment of individual student work in the terminal stage of the program, that reflects exemplary, average, and minimally acceptable performance, demonstrates that the degree-level standard has been achieved.
4. The program review procedure includes:
- (a) A Self-Study

A study undertaken by faculty members and administrators of the program based on

evidence relating to program performance against the criteria stated above, including strengths and weaknesses, desired improvements, and future directions.

(b) A Program Evaluation Committee

A committee struck by the senior administration to evaluate the program based on (a) the self-study and a site visit during which members of the committee normally meet with faculty members, students, graduates, employers, and administrators to gather information. A majority of the members must be academic peers with relevant expertise from outside the institution and free of any conflict of interest.<sup>14</sup>

(c) The Report of the Committee

The overarching purpose of the Program Evaluation Committee report is to assess program quality and recommend any changes needed to strengthen that quality. The report must be addressed to the senior administration and shared with the academic council and governing Board, together with a plan of action responding to the recommendations in the report.

<sup>14</sup> A conflict of interest policy similar to that of the Board should be implemented in selecting members of a Program Evaluation Committee. See chapter 12 of this handbook.

## 10. RECOGNITION OF PRIOR ASSESSMENTS

The Board acknowledges the potentially unique circumstances facing applicants that have, within the past two years:

- been granted a Ministerial Consent to operate the program in question or another program in Ontario;
- applied for a renewal of Ministerial Consent;
- completed a thorough program evaluation
- completed a thorough institutional evaluation.

Applicants in any of these circumstances may ask the Board to consider the applicant's performance record in Ontario or the findings of a recent program quality assessment in the formulation of the Board's recommendations to the Minister.

In its request to the Board, the applicant must submit the following information:

- (a) a complete application in accord with the Board's *Submission Guidelines*;
- (b) where an applicant has previously received Ministerial Consent to operate a program in Ontario, evidence that documents the applicant's performance record;
- (c) where an applicant has recently completed program quality assessment, documentation of the criteria, standards, and procedures used in the review/assessment recently undertaken;
- (d) the complete reports resulting from the review/assessment process undertaken previously; and
- (e) written permission for the Board or its agents to consult the assessors or any professional, accrediting, or regulatory body named in the submitted documentation.

### 10.1 Recognition of Prior Assessments

The Board has sole discretion to recognize the findings of another reviewing body. The Board must be satisfied that the prior review examined the program against standards and benchmarks similar to those established by the Board. The Board will also consider:

- how recently the review occurred;
- the credibility of the reviewing body;
- the criteria, standards and procedures used in the assessment;
- the qualifications, standing, and objectivity of the external reviewers involved;
- evidence that the quality of the program will be maintained in Ontario.

### 10.2 The Recognition Process

The Board expects applicants wishing to have prior assessments considered to adduce all relevant evidence. The Board will review and assess the nature and adequacy of any recent prior reviews or assessments in the light of the criteria and procedures outlined in this handbook.

If the Board finds that the prior assessment meets all of its standards and procedural requirements, the Board will normally recognize the outcome of that prior assessment as satisfying its requirements.

If the Board finds that the prior assessment meets only some of its standards and procedural requirements, the Board will normally recognize the relevant portions and ask its assessors to address the remaining matters.

If the Board finds that it would not be appropriate to recognize and use any of the findings of a prior assessment, the application will proceed through the normal process for assessment.

## 11. NOMENCLATURE OF DEGREES

### 11.1 Common Usage

Consistent use of nomenclature contributes to public understanding of the qualifications of the credential holder and the nature of the postsecondary education achieved. The nomenclature preferred by the Board will maintain a modest, generic quality to facilitate public understanding and assist students, employers, and other postsecondary institutions to recognize the nature of the degree.

Degree titles should convey accurate information about the level, nature, and discipline of study and facilitate recognition of the credential in Ontario. The Board has sole discretion to recommend to the Minister an alternative degree title for the proposed program.

The following are common titles for undergraduate and graduate degrees in Ontario and other Canadian jurisdictions. The list is meant to be descriptive, rather than prescriptive.

#### Baccalaureate Degree Titles

Bachelor of Accounting  
 Bachelor of Administration  
 Bachelor of Administrative Studies  
 Bachelor of Administrative and Commercial Studies  
 Bachelor of Applied Arts  
 Bachelor of Applied Health Sciences  
 Bachelor of Applied Management  
 Bachelor of Applied Science  
 Bachelor of Applied Technology  
 Bachelor of Arts  
 Bachelor of Arts and Science  
 Bachelor of Arts in Community Studies  
 Bachelor of Business Administration  
 Bachelor of Christian Education  
 Bachelor of Commerce  
 Bachelor of Community Rehabilitation  
 Bachelor of Computer Science  
 Bachelor of Computer Science and Surveying  
     Engineering  
 Bachelor of Computing and Business  
 Bachelor of Design  
 Bachelor of Education  
 Bachelor of Engineering  
 Bachelor of Engineering and Management  
 Bachelor of Engineering and Society

Bachelor of Environmental Design  
 Bachelor of Environmental Studies  
 Bachelor of Exercise and Sports Science  
 Bachelor of Fine Arts  
 Bachelor of First Nations and Aboriginal  
     Counselling  
 Bachelor of General Studies  
 Bachelor of Health Sciences  
 Bachelor of Health Studies  
 Bachelor of Human Justice  
 Bachelor of Human Kinetics  
 Bachelor of Human Resources Development  
 Bachelor of Human Resources Management  
 Bachelor of Humanities  
 Bachelor of Indian Social Work  
 Bachelor of Journalism  
 Bachelor of Kinesiology  
 Bachelor of Landscape Architecture  
 Bachelor of Law  
 Bachelor of Management  
 Bachelor of Maritime Studies  
 Bachelor of Mathematics  
 Bachelor of Medical Rehabilitation  
 Bachelor of Music  
 Bachelor of Music Education  
 Bachelor of Music Therapy  
 Bachelor of Musical Arts  
 Bachelor of Nursing  
 Bachelor of Office Management  
 Bachelor of Outdoor Recreation  
 Bachelor of Philosophy  
 Bachelor of Physical Activity Studies  
 Bachelor of Physical Education  
 Bachelor of Physical and Health Education  
 Bachelor of Professional Arts  
 Bachelor of Public Administration  
 Bachelor of Public Affairs and Policy Management  
 Bachelor of Public Relations  
 Bachelor of Recreation and Leisure Studies  
 Bachelor of Recreation Management  
 Bachelor of Recreation Studies  
 Bachelor of Science  
 Bachelor of Science Community Studies  
 Bachelor of Science in Dentistry  
 Bachelor of Science in Engineering  
 Bachelor of Science in Nutrition  
 Bachelor of Social Science  
 Bachelor of Social Work  
 Bachelor of Special Education

Bachelor of Sports Management  
 Bachelor of Technology  
 Bachelor of Theology  
 Bachelor of Tourism and Hospitality Management  
 Bachelor of Tourism Management  
 Bachelor of Tourism Studies  
 Bachelor of Vocational Education

#### **Master's Degree Titles**

Master of Accounting  
 Master of Administration  
 Master of Adult Education  
 Master of Advanced Studies in Architecture  
 Master of Applied Human Nutrition  
 Master of Applied Science  
 Master of Applied Statistics  
 Master of Agriculture  
 Master of Architecture  
 Master of Archival Studies  
 Master of Art Conservation  
 Master of Arts  
 Master of Arts, Liberal Studies  
 Master of Biomedical Technology  
 Master of Business Administration  
 Master of City Planning  
 Master of Civil Law  
 Master of Clinical Dentistry  
 Master of Clinical Health Sciences  
 Master of Clinical Science  
 Master of Communication Studies  
 Master of Computer Science  
 Master of Continuing Education  
 Master of Criminology (Applied)  
 Master of Development Economics  
 Master of Distance Education  
 Master of Divinity  
 Master of Economics  
 Master of Education  
 Master of Engineering  
 Master of Engineering Science  
 Master of Environmental Design  
 Master of Environmental Design Studies  
 Master of Fine Arts  
 Master of Forest Engineering  
 Master of Forestry  
 Master of Geographic Information Systems  
 Master of Health Administration  
 Master of Health Sciences  
 Master of Human Ecology  
 Master of Human Kinetics  
 Master of Human Resources Development  
 Master of Human Resources Management  
 Master of Industrial Relations

Master of Information Studies  
 Master of Interior Design  
 Master of Journalism  
 Master of Landscape Architecture  
 Master of Laws  
 Master of Library and Information Studies  
 Master of Linguistics and Exegesis  
 Master of Management and Professional Accounting  
 Master of Management Studies  
 Master of Manufacturing Management  
 Master of Marine Management  
 Master of Mathematics  
 Master of Museum Studies  
 Master of Music  
 Master of Music Therapy  
 Master of Natural Resources Management  
 Master of Nursing  
 Master of Pest Management  
 Master of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences  
 Master of Physical Education  
 Master of Planning  
 Master of Professional Accounting  
 Master of Public Administration  
 Master of Public Health  
 Master of Publishing  
 Master of Religious Education  
 Master of Resources Management  
 Master of Rural Development  
 Master of Sacred Theology  
 Master of Science  
 Master of Social Work  
 Master of Software Systems  
 Master of Spatial Analysis  
 Master of Speech Languages Pathology  
 Master of Strategic Studies  
 Master of the Teaching of Mathematics  
 Master of Theological Studies  
 Master of Theology  
 Master of Urban and Rural Planning  
 Master of Urban Planning  
 Master of Veterinary Science  
 Master of Visual Design  
 Master of Vocational/Technical Education  
 Master of Women's Studies

#### **Doctoral Degree Titles**

Doctor of Canon Law  
 Doctor of Civil Law  
 Doctor of Dental Medicine  
 Doctor of Dental Surgery  
 Doctor of Education  
 Doctor of Juridical Science  
 Doctor of Jurisprudence

Doctor of Laws  
Doctor of Medicine  
Doctor of Ministry  
Doctor of Music  
Doctor of Musical Arts  
Doctor of Philosophy  
Doctor of the Science of Law  
Doctor of Social Work  
Doctor of Theology  
Doctor of Veterinary Medicine  
Doctor of Veterinary Science

## 11.2 Use of the Title "Doctor"

The title "Doctor" may refer to the credential that results from successful completion of a program of study that meets the standards of either a doctoral degree or a health-related professional degree (for example, Doctor of Medicine or Doctor of Dental Surgery). The latter professional degrees may or may not be at the doctoral level in terms of academic degree-level requirements.

In the context of the delivery of health services, use of the title "Doctor" is regulated in Ontario under the Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991.<sup>13</sup> In this context, only members of the specified professions are entitled under the Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991 to use the title "Doctor":

- a) College of Chiropractors of Ontario;
- b) College of Optometrists of Ontario;
- c) College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario;
- d) College of Psychologists of Ontario; and
- e) Royal College of Dental Surgeons of Ontario.

The Board will not normally support proposed degree nomenclature with "Doctor" in the title unless the proposed program meets the Board's criteria and standards for (a) the doctoral degree, or (b) a degree at another level designed to satisfy the educational requirements specified for membership by the regulatory colleges entitled to use the word "doctor" under the Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991.

## 12. POLICY ON CONFLICT OF INTEREST

This policy applies to quality assessors and other experts selected by the Board, and to applicants wishing to declare a conflict of interest with an individual appointed by the Board.

Individuals appointed in these capacities must possess the qualifications to engender the confidence of the Board, the Minister, applicants, the public, accrediting bodies, other degree-granting institutions, and other jurisdictions.

Committee and panel members are expected to avoid conflicts of interest and the appearance of conflict of interest between their duties as a quality assessor, organization reviewer, or adviser and their personal or business interests.

An actual or potential conflict of interest arises when an individual is placed in a situation in which his or her interests and experience appear to conflict with his or her responsibilities to the Board, the Minister, and the public interest.

The Board notes that employment or previous employment at a competitive or potentially competitive institution does not, in and of itself, constitute a conflict of interest.

Individuals appointed by the Board should not have had any connection to the program under review or the applicant institution(s) or program partners within the previous seven years. Some examples of an unacceptable connection include supervision, regular collaboration, visiting/teaching, or other employment.

The Board considers individuals who make public statements or who participate in the preparation of public statement concerning the applicant and/or any aspect of an application for consent, before or during an assessment, to be in conflict of interest by reason of a potential apprehension of bias.

Quality Assessors who have any interest in a proposal by virtue of a past or current connection, or who make public statements about an application under consideration must decline acceptance as a panel member, or withdraw from the panel. All individuals appointed by the Board shall make full written disclosure to the Board of any potential conflict of interest, within the terms of this policy, as soon as the individual knows the applicant's identity. Similarly, if an applicant has evidence of a conflict of interest regarding an individual appointed by the Board, then the applicant shall make full written disclosure to the Board, as soon as the applicant knows the individual's identity. The applicant must not contact the individual directly. The Board will determine whether an actual or potential conflict exists.

Disclosure to the Board must state clearly the details of any affiliation of a nature described in these guidelines.

In accordance with these guidelines, the Board will exercise its discretion in determining whether an actual or potential conflict of interest exists and notify the parties accordingly. The Board cannot act on orally communicated information, or information that is not received in a timely manner. The Board is not responsible for any delay to the Board's assessment process that may result.

## 13. USE OF "UNIVERSITY" AND "UNIVERSITY COLLEGE"

Ministerial consent is required to:

- operate or maintain a university;
- use or be known by a name of a university or any derivation or abbreviation of a name of a university;
- hold oneself out to be a university;
- make use of the term "university" or any derivation or abbreviation of the word in advertising relating to an educational institution in Ontario.

Unless stated otherwise in the Ministerial Consent, a consent to use the word "university" in a name, in advertising, and in promotional activity does not confer any right to offer degree programs.

In preparing recommendations to the Minister on applications to use the terms "university" and "university college", the Board will employ the following criteria.

### 13.1 University

In accord with "educational standards recognized in Ontario and in other jurisdictions," the following criteria are generally related to the practices of universities in Ontario and university systems in major North American jurisdictions.

A university is a legally constituted academic organization:<sup>15</sup>

1. which is legally authorized to grant degrees in Ontario or in another jurisdiction;
2. whose charter or statute includes the word "university" in the organization's title;
3. whose mission and practice includes the creation of knowledge through research and/or scholarly activity and the dissemination of knowledge through teaching, publication, and presentation;

4. which offers a comprehensive range of degree programs, normally including but not limited to arts and science;
5. which normally offers programs at both undergraduate and graduate levels, and has appropriate curriculum design and degree-level learning outcome standards for each program offered leading to the respective degrees;
6. which has policies and procedures for admission, promotion, and graduation of students comparable to the policies and practices of Ontario universities;
7. which constitutes a self-critical, cohesive academic community with a proven commitment to quality assurance, as evidenced by systems for internal and/or external quality assessment reviews of academic programs and operations;
8. which possesses a policy on faculty qualifications (hiring, retention, promotion, professional development, reward, and termination) appropriate to the degree programs offered and to the mission of creating and disseminating knowledge;
9. which possesses or provides access to the learning resources (library, laboratories, equipment, research tools, etc.) appropriate to the range and level of programs offered and necessary for students to achieve the learning outcomes for the programs;
10. which has a governance system in which faculty members participate in decisions determining academic standards, and which provides for appropriate student involvement, and which is committed to principles and practices of academic freedom and responsibility consistent with those adopted by the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC).

### 13.2 Subsidiary of a University

When a university that meets the criteria stated above wishes to extend its activities into Ontario through a legally separate agency, such as a wholly owned subsidiary company or corporation, that subsidiary operation will be considered to be a private applicant.

<sup>15</sup> In Ontario, comprehensive degree-granting institutions are known as universities. In other jurisdictions, "college" is often used to describe primarily undergraduate degree-granting institutions. For the purposes of assessing the applications of such colleges to operate as universities in Ontario, the criteria set out here will apply.

### 13.3 A New University

There are two ways to establish a new university in Ontario — a statute of the Ontario legislature, or Ministerial Consent. This passage relates only to proposals for new universities requiring Ministerial Consent.

The criteria stated above describe a university in a state of mature operation and are not meant to screen out new institutions but to indicate the directions in which they must tend to justify use of the name "university". Recognizing that new universities will start with a proposal rather than with an established operation, the Board will assess a proposal for a new university in terms of how well its plans, commitments, and potential capacity meet the criteria stated above for a university. In addition, the Board will review the proposal in light of its standards and procedures for organization review. Each proposed program will be required to undergo a program quality assessment. The Board may recommend that conditions be attached to a Ministerial Consent to ensure that the institution develops appropriately in the context of the plan and other documents submitted as part of the application.

### 13.4 University College

The phrase "university college" is used in different ways across Canada. In Ontario, most "university colleges" are institutions which hold degree-granting powers but have suspended those powers in favour of participating in the programs and degrees of established universities. There is one independent university college (Redeemer University College) which began as a religious college and has broadened its mandate to include secular programs in the arts and sciences.

Thus, Ontario practice has confined the title to those institutions that are active participants in universities or to an institution that has met the salient criteria for a university but has a narrower range of programs and a special mission.

#### A. Federated/Affiliated University Colleges

An application from a college affiliated with an institutional member of the Council of Ontario Universities to use the title "university college" may be recommended on two conditions:

- if its mission and policies make it an academic component of the university with which it is federated or affiliated, as demonstrated in the federation or affiliation agreement; and
- if the university in whose life the college participates supports the title "university college".

A college that does not offer degree programs will not be recommended for the title "university college".

#### B. Independent University Colleges

An application from a degree-granting institution that aspires to be known as a "university college" will be recommended on two conditions:

- that it shares the salient characteristics of a university as defined above, with justifiable modifications; and
- that it undergoes an organization review with a positive outcome. In addition, each program to be offered by the university college must undergo a program quality assessment.

University colleges offering baccalaureate programs must normally demonstrate a reasonable breadth in the range of disciplines offered to students — e.g., programs in the humanities, social sciences, mathematical, and/or natural sciences.

The more specialized or focused missions of university colleges may take a variety of forms. These include but are not limited to (by way of illustration only): a particular range of programs, sometimes with an integrated or interdisciplinary thrust; a greater emphasis on undergraduate programs; a particular stress on the quality or nature of the teaching environment (while continuing to require and support scholarship); a living-learning environment designed to meet the needs of a particular group (e.g., women) or permeated by particular values (e.g., faith-based values).

Recognizing that it may need to assess proposals for new university colleges, the Board will assess proposals to create a new university college in terms of how well its plans, commitments, and potential capacity meet the criteria for an independent "university college".



## **APPENDIX I**

### **CHANGES FROM THE APRIL 2004 EDITION INCORPORATED IN THIS EDITION OF THE HANDBOOK**

#### **Submission process**

All application materials, including those for the Minister, should now be sent to the Postsecondary Education Quality Assessment Board. See section 5.2 of this *Handbook*.

#### **Board Standards and Benchmarks**

- 7.8 Organization Evaluation added
- 7.9 Minister's Requirements added
- 9.2 Admissions, Promotion, Graduation Standard: Benchmarks 3, 4, and 5 pertaining to credit transfer and recognition, and advanced standing have been elaborated. See benchmarks 3, 4, and 5 in this *Handbook*.

ISBN 0-7794-3392-0

02-152

© Postsecondary Education Quality Assessment  
Board, 2005



